A CHILD'S STORY OF HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

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Jeanne Friis-Holm

September 1947

Long Beach

California

A fine account of my

beloved author.

G. F-H.

A Child's Story of Hans Christian Andersen

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By

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"My life is a beautiful story,
happy and full of incident."

I

Childhood

A Child's Story of Hans Christian Andersen

I

Childhood

HANS Christian Andersen was born April 2nd, 1805, at Odense, the third largest city of Denmark. There was much ado in the town that day. The people were celebrating the fourth anniversary of a famous naval battle, as well as honouring the presence of fifty-one prominent musicians and singers who had come to take part in a grand concert. For an hour or more in the morning the chimes of the ancient church of St. Canute rang out. There the concert, the proceeds of which were to be distributed among the poor, was to be held. The streets were

crowded with people in holiday attire, flags and bunting fluttered from housetops and fronts, and practically all business was suspended. Of course no one could, at that time, identify the celebration with the birth of the most famous writer Denmark ever produced, but we may now regard it somehow as the town's first greeting to its wonderful son.

The parents of the author were one of the poorest families in Odense, and their home one of the most wretched. They occupied a single room on the ground floor of a straggling house, far from the main thoroughfares. This room contained all their belongings. Here they ate, slept, and received their few acquaintances. Here too, Hans' father, a cobbler, plied his trade. Nearly the

whole space of the room was taken up by his work-bench, the bed and the crude turn-up bedstead which served as a cradle for the little child. There were a number of old pictures on the walls, on a chest of drawers over by the window stood some porcelain wares, glasses and knick-knacks, and above the work-bench hung a shelf filled with old books. In his Autobiography the famous story-teller says: "The little room seemed large and handsome to me. Some previous lodger had painted bits of landscape on panels of the door, and the sight of them was then just as significant to me as now an entire picture gallery."

The cobbler cared vastly more about his shelf-full of books than the making or mending of boots. Indeed, not only did he find his work

onerous, he was actually ashamed of it. As a boy he had frequently urged and begged his parents to allow him to study, and enter the Latin School in order that he might equip himself with a good education. But they pleaded poverty as an excuse for not granting his wish. That discouragement almost broke the boy's heart and he could never quite forgive them. Even now, seated before the ill-smelling lamp and patches of water-soaked leather, he would silently reproach his father for having apprenticed him to a handicraft so irksome. And he would close his eyes, now and then, to dream of the great wide world outside, of fair cities he had read about and longed to visit, and of Napoleon, his hero, whose conquering armies he sighed for a chance to join. He never

smiled or laughed save when he happened to be reading *Arabian Nights*, or the humourous plays of Ludvig Holburg, who has been called the Danish Shakespeare. Of customers he had few, of real friends none at all. The neighbors were inclined to make fun of him, some calling him a crank, while others went so far as to declare he was crazy, like his poor old father, about whom we shall hear anon.

In several respects the cobbler was like an older brother to his little son, at the time of whose birth he was but twenty-two years of age. They got on splendidly in each other's company, the father always letting Hans have his own way. Every Sunday, during spring, summer and autumn, the weather permitting, they would walk out hand in hand into the beau-

tiful fields and forests that encircle Odense. There Hans soon learned the names of the various flowers, plants and trees he came across, and he listened eagerly to what his father told him of the wonders of creation. Sometimes their journeys brought them very far from home and the child's little legs would wobble with weariness, but then he would be treated to a ride on his father's back. Once a year, regularly, at Easter time, Mrs. Andersen would accompany them on these delightful outings. On such occasions she invariably wore her finest dress—a calico gown which she never used but when she attended Holy Communion.

Hans Christian, as he was called by his parents, was a most well-behaved little fellow. You might have thought

him a goody-goody, as did the boys of his time generally, for he was extremely shy and backward, and his blue eyes readily filled with tears. He had no playmates, nor did he seek the company of any. He took no part whatever in the games that children of his own age played then as they play them to-day: tag, hide-and-seek, blind man's buff, puss-in-the-corner, snap-the-whip, etc. His only companions were the large group of dolls he owned. These his father had made for him, even to the pretty dresses they wore. The cobbler's nimble fingers had also fashioned for his child a fine assortment of toys, unequalled perhaps in the whole city; and constructed a sort of show-box, supplied with a lot of pictures representing churches, cloisters and handsome buildings.

The more Hans looked at them, the more he yearned to see them in life, and to go to the German city of Augsburg where they were to be found. Why did not Odense have such fine sights, such big streets, he wondered.

Although his home was as humble as it could well be, Hans thrived finely within its walls. His mother was the proudest mother in all Denmark. She kept her boy as neatly dressed as she could afford to, and curled his hair most carefully. Upon Hans' little plate she put the choicest things to eat that the house contained; though she could not refrain from reminding him that he was faring a great deal better than was really in keeping with their circumstances.

"We are awfully poor," she would

say to him, "and yet you get dainties delicious enough for a duke's child. How much better off you are than I was, as a little girl. My mother often drove me out into the streets to beg, and I can remember once when I sat all day long under a bridge, hungry and distressed, wishing I were dead."

It is true that Hans' mother had worked hard all her life. Her childhood held nothing upon which she could look back with pleasure and say: "How sweet it was!" or "How I wish those days would return!" For her there had been no looking at pretty pictures, no playing at delightful games, no reading of nice books, nor scarcely any going to school at all.

Hans' first and favorite playground was the yard in the rear of his house. He liked to call it his garden, his park

even, though it contained only a few hedges and a lone gooseberry bush, to which the child was greatly attached. For hours at a time he would sit beside that gooseberry bush, under the tent he had made of one of his mother's old aprons, gazing up at the drifting skies, listening to bird-song, or to the roaring hum of the mill-wheel close by. The mill stood then exactly where it stands now, at the end of the brook that gives it its power, the historic Odense *Aa,* meaning a rivulet. At the foot of the street in which the author lived, a bridge crossed the stream and brought you into what Hans considered a real wonderland. There were willows and burdocks in such numbers that you could lose yourself among them. The holes in the turf resembled the entrance of caves, which you would

fancy to be inhabited by monsters. A world of toads frolicked hideously on the banks of the water, the bubbles on whose surface appeared to Hans like so many shooting stars. Passing on a little farther you reached the moor, always mist-laden, always mysterious, on warm summer evenings. Here the future story-teller found one of his best friends for life: the stork. In form he really came to look somewhat like this strange bird, his body was so gaunt and crooked, his legs so thin and long. Like the stork, he too was fond of roaming through many countries, never settling in one place. You could scarcely count all the journeys he made in his life-time.

There were unusual sights to be seen in the streets in those days. Napoleon, who was bent on conquering

Sweden, had sent an army of Frenchmen and Spaniards into Denmark, which country was in alliance with him. A great number of these swarthy sons of the south were quartered in and about Odense. They slept on pallets of straw along the streets, lounged in the square, and on Sundays held mass like the good Catholics they were, in open tents, or in the schoolhouses, which they had turned into armories. One day, when Hans was only about four years of age, and as he was walking through the town unaccompanied, he happened to see a Spaniard unbutton his coat and draw forth the image of a saint, to kiss it reverently. At first the little boy was amazed, he had never seen such an act before. He stepped up in front of the soldier and boldly asked him what he

meant by kissing the image. On being told, Hans expressed his desire to touch the object with his lips.

"Will you please let me?" he asked.

"Yes, since you seem to be such a nice little fellow, you may," the Spaniard replied.

Afterwards, overcome with strange feelings, he ran home to his mother to tell her what had happened to him. But she was aggrieved and angry. Only the Roman Catholics did such things, she declared, cautioning Hans never to disgrace himself that way again.

Hans devoutly promised to remember that he was a Lutheran, like the rest of his countrymen, though the Spaniard's act of worship had so impressed him that years afterward he

wrote a poem describing the incident. It is entitled *The Soldier.*

The cobbler's love for his boy was almost if not quite equalled by the affection of Hans' grandmother, on his father's side. This kindly old woman visited the Andersen home every day, and while she was there it seemed that the dingy room grew brighter and more cheerful. On stepping across the threshold her first question would be:

"How's my little pet to-day?"

Whereupon Hans would give a glad cry as he romped over to her side, to be fondled and lifted up on her knee. On Saturday afternoons she brought flowers from the little garden she kept in order over by the Graabrödre Hospital or asylum. These were placed in a vase on the chest of

drawers between the windows and gave fragrance to and adorned the home over Sunday. Frequently she had sweetmeats for her grandchild—gingerbreadmen or fruits. Such good things did not come from her own home, however, for that was even as wretched as the boy's—but from the pantry of the asylum to which the garden where she worked was attached and where she took most of her meals.

The cobbler's mother was never accompanied by her husband when she called. That poor old man was no pleasant person to see. Hans feared him, and no wonder. The street-boys jeered at him, ran at his heels, shouting and hooting. Why? Because he was a hopeless simpleton. When he came walking you would think he was wading through the water, he

dragged his feet so. He never looked this way or that, or straight ahead, but always had his eyes fixed on the ground. If you were brave enough to stop in front of him and address him, he would stare at you till the blood ran cold in your veins. He had long ago ceased doing any sensible work, and now amused himself by cutting all sorts of queer figures out of wood. For instance, he carved lion-headed fishes, or fish-headed lions, and made four-footed beasts with wings. These products of his crazy skill he would peddle around in the country, selling them for whatever the purchaser chose to offer—a handful of barley to cook porridge of, or a bit of pork. Timid children ran panic-stricken at the sight of him, though he never harmed anyone. In

the fourteen years Hans spent at Odense, before going to Copenhagen to seek fame there, his grandfather spoke to him but once.

When Hans had attained the age of five, Mrs. Andersen decided to send him to school to learn the alphabet, and to read and write. She accordingly took him to a schoolma'am who conducted a kindergarten in the neighborhood, leaving instructions with her that under no circumstances, for no cause whatever, would she suffer her child to be punished.

"He is a good child," said Mrs. Andersen, "and will not be disobedient, or deserve a whipping. If you should ever lay hands on him, I will remove him from your school at once."

The schoolma'am smilingly prom-

ised to refrain from applying the rod to Hans' little body, and for a few weeks she was as kind as kind could be. Hans tried to please her in every way by being punctual, attentive and industrious. But one day when the teacher was in a bad mood, it happened that Hans was playing instead of working at his desk. Forgetting her promise to Mrs. Andersen, the lady began scolding her pupil most severely, nor did she stop before she had beaten him with the cane she kept for the purpose. But while he was being spanked Hans looked up into the schoolma'am's flushed face and said, indignantly:

"How dare you whip me while God is looking on?"

Hans Christian Andersen never entered that kindergarten again. The

very next day, after she had called the teacher to account for breaking her promise, Mrs. Andersen took her boy out of the school. Soon after she placed him in a regular boys' school, in charge of a Mr. Carstens. This man looked after his new pupil with fatherly kindness. He had instantly taken a fancy to the little curly-haired fellow, and saw to it that none of the other boys annoyed or bullied him. At recess he would take Hans by the hand and walk the playground with him, or watch the games of the other children. Oftentimes he presented the cobbler's child with cakes or flowers. Later, this kind teacher became manager of a telegraph station in another town, and Hans saw no more of him. But Mr. Carstens always remembered with ever-grow-

ing pride that he had been the first man-teacher of the celebrated story-teller.

In the third school he attended, Hans received very poor instruction in religion, penmanship and arithmetic. His lessons were so short and easy that he never studied them at home, but merely read them over once on his way to school in the morning. Mrs. Andersen was greatly pleased with his scholarship.

"Look at my boy," she would cry to her neighbors, "he hardly ever glances at his lessons, and yet he gets perfect marks. That proves what a fine head he has. Your boys study and study till long after bed-time, and yet Hans is ahead of them all."

It was at about this time that the author of "The Ugly Duckling" did

one of the strangest things in his whole career. Both his mother and grandmother, as well as his teachers, had often spoken of the almightiness of God. The Creator could do whatever He pleased, they said. Nothing was impossible for Him. If He chose, He could crush the world in one second, or strike the stars from the heavens. Hans pondered a long time over this and then decided to make an experiment to see for himself. One afternoon he quietly left his home and hurried on to a marl-pit quite a distance off. Standing on the bank and looking into the deep muddy water for a moment, the little lad folded his hands, raised his head toward heaven, and exclaimed:

"Now, if You are Almighty, dear God, You will not let me drown."

Plash! Down he plunged into the cold water. Oh, but he was sinking.

"Help! Help! Help!" the poor child shouted, kicking his feet with all his might and reaching out for the shore. For half a minute he managed to keep afloat, although he could not swim. By the end of that time, fortunately, his frantic cries had attracted the notice of a passerby who rushed to his rescue. Chilled and penitent, though grateful and full of good resolutions for the future, Hans was pulled out of the pond and taken home. Of course Mrs. Andersen was somewhat angry, though naturally she could not help rejoicing over her boy's narrow escape from death. That night, kneeling by the bed, Hans prayed God to forgive him for that foolish experiment

of his, and thanked him humbly for letting him off so easy.

The Graabrödre Hospital or asylum was occupied by the queerest people of the town. There lived old, witch-like women and old, villainous-looking men, who had become public charges. Accompanied by his grandmother, our little friend often visited this institution.

That is, in the beginning, he frequented the servants' dining room only when he was invited to take dinner or supper there by his father's mother as a reward for having helped her at weeding the garden or raking the rubbish together. Oh, how well the food tasted away from home, he thought. The servants of the place liked him; he was such a quiet child. After a while he grew brave enough

to venture into the spinning room, where a score of grey-haired women were employed at their distaffs. To look at, they all seemed harmless enough.

"Don't be afraid of us," they assured Hans. "We are glad to see you. We hear that you are such a clever little boy."

Many months did not pass before Hans Christian Andersen became a great favorite in the spinning room, especially on account of his gift for entertaining. He amused the lonely old women by making chalk drawings on the walls, illustrating the organs of the human body. Now he would talk about the heart and explain how it pumped the blood through the whole system; now about the lungs and respiration; now about the stomach

and digestion, etc. This knowledge of anatomy he had acquired from a studious reading of a book on the subject in his father's library. Hans' lectures were a splendid success.

"What a wise child! He knows as much as the doctor," some one in the audience would declare.

"He is too wise to be able to live long," another would put in. "Such clever children die young."

At these remarks, as well as others of a similar nature, the young lecturer would feel highly pleased. He began to take the old women into his confidence, telling them about the big plans he cherished. As a reward for the pleasure he gave them, they told him uncountable stories, some of which Hans rewrote a long time later and published among his fairy tales. It

was here that he heard the tale of Big Claus and Little Claus for the first time.

Into the other wards of the asylum Hans never came. He imagined that they were filled with thieving tramps, law-breakers of a dangerous type, highwaymen and cutthroats, even as he fancied the House of Correction to be, where he had had one terrible experience. The gatekeeper of that institution, a friend of the cobbler's and sponsor of Hans at his christening, had one evening invited the Andersens to a party at his home in the basement of the great dismal building, the very sight of which was wont to drive cold shivers down the backs of all timid young people. Hans was taken along, though he was so small he had to be carried in his father's arms.

All went well till he heard the

click of the giant entrance gate and faced the keeper, who stood there with a heavy bunch of keys in his hands. Then all the horrors of the prison filled his heart with awful fear.

"I want to go home," the child cried. "Take me home, papa."

The cobbler managed to reassure his little boy. There was nothing to be afraid of, he said. The prisoners were all locked up in their respective cells.

"And you know," the parent continued, "we are to have mountains of fine things to eat—jam, cakes, fruit, and dainties you never tasted before. Be a big boy now, and stop crying."

But Hans was no sooner seated at table than he noticed that the food was being served by two men in striped clothing—two prisoners, of course. He

gave a gasp and broke down, completely horror-stricken. The tears streamed down his face and he trembled from head to foot. The dainties placed before him he pushed away, and he would partake of no food whatever. At length Mrs. Andersen had to put him in bed in an adjoining room, where he remained till the party was over. For many days the child suffered from the shock of this adventure.

At the age of eight Hans composed his first poem. His mother read it and thought it pretty good. Encouraged by her approval, the boy decided to write a number of poems, as well as dramas, stories, tragedies, novels, etc. He made up a long list of his planned works, and jotted down their titles in the blank pages of his father's

account book. He was especially bent on composing a play, the hero of which should be a modern king. How did monarchs talk, Hans wondered. What language did they employ? He did not know. And who could tell him? For he must find out. He went to his mother, who, unable to enlighten him, questioned the neighbors. They shook their heads. They did not know how kings talked. Undaunted, our ambitious friend consulted a dictionary of foreign words. From this he collected several hundred prepositions, adjectives, adverbs, verbs and nouns, in four or five different languages, and formed sentences that read something like this:

"Gestern abend while Signor Carni was walking ned ad Rue d' Amsterdam mödte han son frère."

But this was hard work, and eventually Hans gave it up. Besides, the whole town was laughing at him.

"Look at the crazy cobbler's boy," urchins would shriek at him on the streets. "The scribbler! He thinks he can write plays for the stage."

In 1816 occurred the death of Hans Andersen, the cobbler. The year before, he had gone away to join the troops of Napoleon as a mercenary, but had got no further than the Province of Holsten, at the southern boundary of his country, when the news arrived that General Wellington and his allies had crushed forever the hopes of the Corsican conqueror at Waterloo. It was not so much the love of fighting that drove the cobbler to take this step; it was his desire to see strange places, to go abroad, to

breathe foreign air. He was tired of Odense, where he found time so heavy and life so joyless. Returning to Denmark to his old work-bench after his futile journey, his spirit was wrecked, and the next spring he died, only thirty-three years of age.

Two years later his widow married again. Hans' stepfather, Niels Jorgensen Gundersen by name, was also a cobbler. He seems to have been a kindly man. At least he never opposed the wishes of his little step-son. Shortly after her second marriage Mrs. Andersen, or Gundersen, moved farther down the mill street. The garden belonging to the new home was both larger and prettier than that of the old. It contained more than one gooseberry bush, as well as currant bushes and other plants. Then,

too, it abutted on the Odense Aa, the rivulet in whose waters Mrs. Andersen, standing on a rock a few feet off the shore, washed her linen. In this garden Hans heard the remarkable story from the mouth of a neighbor that the Empire of China was situated under the bottom of the stream. He forthwith began to expect the appearance of some yellow Chinese Prince, who should make his way up through the muddy depths, greet him and proceed at once by magic means to make him rich and famous.

The boy's first visit to the theatre was an event of far-reaching importance to Hans Christian Andersen. His mother, anxious that her child should appear to advantage among the well-dressed audience, did all in her power to array him in the neatest

of clothes on that occasion. Unable to purchase a new suit for him, she engaged a seamstress to make over one of her husband's cast-off frocks to fit the little fellow, while she herself pinned four or five patches of silk together across his chest so that they represented a waistcoat. A huge cloth was tied around his neck for a cravat, he was washed with a better quality of soap than that usually used by the family, and his hair was carefully curled and combed and parted on the side. Thus attired, our friend entered the playhouse for the first time.

He was delighted, charmed, enraptured by the performance. When he came home the first thing he did was to throw one of his mother's aprons on his shoulders, like a knight's cloak, place himself before

the mirror and imitate the antics of the actors in the play. He remembered a great many of the speeches they had uttered, and repeated them while his mother looked on and listened in amazement. For hours at a time, for days, he would carry on this way. At last when she could restrain herself no longer, and when all other attempts to make him stop had failed, his mother gave him a whipping.

"You must be crazy, you little fool," she declared. "I never saw such a child!"

Meanwhile Hans had struck up an acquaintance with the bill-poster of the theatre, one Peter Junker, who, much as he would have liked to do so, had not the power to give boys free passes to the playhouse.

"If only I had the money, I'd go and see the actors every night," the child told the bill-poster. "But if you'll give me a program now and then, I'll help you to distribute your bills as often as you like."

This proposition was entirely acceptable to the bill-poster. In Hans he found an enthusiastic assistant, unafraid of bad weather or long walks.

"I wonder why you prize those bills so highly. What do you do with them?" Mr. Junker once asked.

"I study them to see how the plays are made," the boy truthfully replied. "When I read them I fancy I am at the theatre. I see the stage before me, and the scenery, and I imagine the whole play. Some day, you know, I am going to be an actor myself."

"Really," the bill-poster exclaimed. "An actor, did you say? But are you sure you will make a good actor?"

"Well, I'm going to be famous. That's all I know. First you go through a lot of suffering, and then you grow famous."

But Mrs. Andersen was not at all pleased at her boy's determination to go on the stage. She wanted him to learn some trade, and believed him to be well fitted for the profession of tailor, because he could handle a needle so well.

"Wouldn't you like to own a fine tailor shop like Mr. Stegman's, Hans?" she would ask. "Just look how prosperous he is. He keeps four assistants and lives in the most fashionable street. I'm sure you would succeed as a tailor."

Hans shook his head. He would not hear of such an idea. A company of actors from the Royal Theatre had just then visited Odense. Everybody was talking about their splendid acting. The boy had seen them and his mind was made up. It all seemed so easy to him. The road to success was short and it ran down hill, he thought. First he would go to Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, the great city where the king lived. Then he would call on the manager of the Royal Theatre and state his errand. Of course, the manager would not fail to give him a position immediately, and soon he would be the idol of all the theatre-goers.

Thus the sanguine little lad reasoned. Certain well-to-do people in his home town who had heard him

sing and recite, had began to encourage him somewhat. Among those who perceived that the cobbler's son was an extraordinary child may be mentioned Colonel Höegh-Guldberg, a gentleman of considerable influence. Through his efforts, Hans procured an interview with the Prince Christian, the Governor of the Province, later King Christian VIII. of Denmark, and the admiring friend of Hans Christian Andersen.

The boy bravely stated his case to the royal personage. But Prince Christian had no sympathy with the profession of acting, and he discouraged his youthful petitioner from entertaining that aspiration.

"I cannot help you at all," said the Prince, "if you insist on becoming an actor. If you will agree to

give up that idea, and learn a trade, any trade at all, I'll see you through the coming years till you are able to earn your own living."

Shortly afterwards, at Easter, Hans was confirmed. His mother had kept urging him to go to work, and finally, seeing how hard it was for her to support him any more (the poor woman even had to take in washing) the boy got a job in a factory. Earning but a few pennies a day at a task he hated, our friend shed many tears over his unhappy lot. Besides, the journeymen employed at the factory were a most cruel crowd. They were all the time making fun of him, saying harsh things to him, and took delight in seeing him miserable. Only when he sang did they stop abusing him and listen with great attention and regard.

"All the looms stood still while I sang," Andersen tells us in his autobiography.

One day after he had been insulted despicably by a coarse journeyman, Mrs. Andersen took her boy out of the factory. Hans begged and begged her to let him go to Copenhagen.

"I know I shall be famous," he pleaded, "and rich, too, and I'll give you lots of money and fine clothes and things. Only let me go."

This time the cobbler's wife, who had unbounded belief in the predictions of charlatans, went with her boy to an old fortune-teller, who declared that Hans Christian Andersen would become famous, so famous indeed that he would live to see the city of Odense illumined in his honour. That settled all of Mrs.

Andersen's doubts and she gave her consent.

Then Hans, in scrambling haste, collected some seven dollars from a number of his well-wishers, secured a few letters of introduction to persons of prominence in the capital, wrapped up his few belongings in a bundle, and was ready for the long wished-for journey in the stage-coach to Copenhagen. His poor old grandmother was present at his departure. Tearfully she threw her arms around her beloved grandson, wishing him God-speed. They never saw each other again, for three years later the cobbler's mother died and was buried in the churchyard of the poor.

On Monday, September 6, 1819, Hans Christian Andersen, with less than seven dollars in his pocket, with-

out a friend or even an acquaintance in the big city, arrived in Copenhagen, full of courage and ambition, and energy of a quality seldom surpassed in man.

II

The Young Man

II

The Young Man

HANS was the first of the passsengers to alight from the stage when it stopped at the end of its journey, just outside the city gate. His body felt somewhat stiff and sore from the jolting of a ride covering almost one hundred miles, over rough roads, and he could have devoured a big meal. The other travellers had comparatively small reason to complain; *they* had sat on soft cushions in the coach, while Hans had occupied a hard seat on the box beside the driver, as a special "fare." But then, by enduring this hardship he had saved one-half the regular price of the long

journey. Now the ordeal was over; the boy paid the driver his three rix dollars ($1.50 in our money), tucked his bundle under his arm and hurried on along the street that led into the main section of the town.

To think that he had really arrived at his destination! How strange it seemed! Was he not dreaming? Was this actually Copenhagen, the home of King Frederick VI and his court, of the Royal Theatre and all its actors and actresses? He stopped for a moment to look ahead. Yes, that heaven-reaching spire yonder certainly belonged to the Church of Our Lady. He recognized it from pictures he had seen. That huge funnel-shaped structure a little to the left could only be the famous ancient Round Tower (up whose zigzag pathway Peter the Great

of Russia is said to have ridden on horse back), and those gables looming up amid the green foliage of a park—what were they but the Rosenborg Castle? No, he was not dreaming, but wide awake. His cheeks began to glow with expectancy. He instantly felt at home now, though he knew not a single person among the city's three hundred thousand inhabitants.

After securing temporary lodgings and enjoying some light refreshment, Hans hastened to the site of the Royal Theatre, which faces the King's New Square. The vision of the great building deeply affected him. He could not see enough of it, and walked around to admire it from every side. It was magnificent, he thought. Standing at the stage entrance, he said, half aloud:

"Some day I'll be passing in and out of this door, and it won't be long from now, God willing."

Thereupon he went back to the main entrance and up the stairway to glance at the play-bill for the evening's performance. How he wished he could have afforded to buy a ticket for no matter how poor a seat in the top gallery! It was such a temptation.

"Want a ticket for to-night's play?" asked the voice of a well-dressed man at his shoulder.

Hans turned quickly, his heart leaping high with joy. The stranger was holding out a handful of tickets to him. Selecting one from the bunch, the boy doffed his cap politely and began to thank his supposed benefactor with all his heart, when—

"You scoundrel! You loafer!"

cried the ticket speculator (for such he was). "I'll teach you to play horse with me. Give back that ticket and clear out of this before I knock your head off."

"I meant no harm," poor Hans sobbed. "I only thought—"

But before he could finish his explanation the rude man raised his arm to strike, and the cobbler's son, terrified, took to his heels. This was his first disheartening experience of life at the metropolis. As we shall see, many others were to follow.

The very next day, dressed in the finest garments he owned—shoes polished to a glitter, hair carefully curled and combed—Hans Christian Andersen went to call on a celebrated ballet dancer, one Madame Schall. He was convinced that as soon as this

lady had seen him perform she would take an interest in him and gladly do what she could for him. He had a letter of introduction to her from Mr. Iversen, an Odense printer. Now, Madame Schall had never met or even heard of Mr. Iversen, who knew her merely through the newspaper accounts of her feats. But after reading the printer's note, which spoke of Hans as a clever lad, full of ambition, the famous dancer decided to receive her caller, so she instructed her maid to show him in. In marched Hans, confident and dignified. Approaching the elegantly gowned lady, he bowed low, and thus addressed her:

"May I have the honour of giving you an exhibition of my art, Madame?"

Without waiting for a reply, he

gave a queer leap into the air, striking his heels together. Thereupon he began to sing and dance a part from Cinderella, using his cap for a tambourine. At first, Madame Schall, too amazed to act, simply sat back in her chair and looked on. But little by little, her guest showing no inclination to stop his antics, she concluded he must be a lunatic. Then she got up, thoroughly angry, and summoning her maid, the two women forcibly ejected the unwelcome performer, showering words of reproach upon him the while. Again tears filled the eyes of our friend. To no purpose did he ask for time to explain the object of his visit. In vain did he pray for the stern lady's forgiveness. His words fell upon deaf ears. The door slammed in his face; behind it

stood Madame Schall, congratulating herself on having got rid of the boy who had come hoping to gain her sympathy.

To whom could he now appeal? His money was fast vanishing. Soon he would be penniless—and what then? But it would not do to lose heart. Now was the time to show his mettle. He pooh-poohed this one little discouragement and decided that his next step should be a most important one.

"I'll go and see the manager-in-chief of the Royal Theatre," said Hans to himself. "He's the man to befriend me."

But it was no easy matter for an unrecommended stranger to secure an audience with this high official. Again and again young Andersen called to

learn that the manager was "too busy to see anyone." But he persevered and finally succeeded in being admitted into the Presence.

"Well, young man, what is the nature of your business here"? Chamberlain Holstein demanded, eyeing the applicant closely.

Not at all frustrated by the somewhat gruff greeting, Hans began to speak of his plans for the future, explaining how eager he was to go on the stage, what high praise his townsmen had lavished upon his singing and dancing. In short he talked with great eloquence and enthusiasm and even offered to display his ability then and there. But Mr. Holstein raised his hand in protest:

"No, no," he declared, "you are too lean for the stage."

The ambitious boy had a good reply ready:

"If you'll but engage me at an annual salary of 100 rix dollars, sir, I shall get fat soon enough."

Mr. Holstein smiled but shook his head. That ended the interview.

On his way homeward through the crowded streets, Hans suddenly remembered that he had read about an Italian, one Siboni, in the newspapers. This man was director of the Royal Conservatory of Music. Why not try him? It might be that he would praise his voice as had Colonel Höegh Guldberg of Odense. Getting hold of a city directory he looked up the address of Mr. Siboni and repaired to the latter's residence. The director's housekeeper met Hans at the door.

"Oh, you can't see Mr. Siboni

now," she exclaimed. "He is entertaining a party of friends—famous men—and can't be interrupted. You'll have to come again some other day."

"But I *must* see him," Hans pleaded. "My very life depends on it. I want him to hear me sing and recite. I'm a poor boy and I've come all the way from Odense to seek my fortune here. All I ask is a chance to be heard. I am going to be famous some day, clairvoyants have so prophesied and I know it myself. But now I am in desperate straits. Please let me in, that I may prove my ability before Mr. Siboni, then maybe he will do something for me. Ah, don't refuse."

After some further talk, the housekeeper, unable to resist the persuasive manner of young Andersen, admitted

him. That was a glorious moment for the cobbler's son. Strangely excited when he faced the company of famous men, who were all in high spirits, he could say nothing for a minute or two. But suddenly his stage-fright disappeared, his power of speech returned to him, and he apprised Mr. Siboni of the nature of his errand.

"Aha," the music director exclaimed. "You want to sing and recite and dance for us. Well now, that isn't bad. What say you, gentlemen? Shall we accept this young man's offer to entertain us?"

"By all means," they cried in chorus.

Hans Christian Andersen bowed gratefully and straightway began to recite a certain piece he had memor-

ized from the works of one of the classic Danish poets. Little by little, the charm of the situation commenced to overwhelm him. He felt the gaze of many eyes following his movements critically. He heard his own voice resounding through the great room—saw the fashionably attired gentlemen seated at the table before their sparkling champagne. What would they say; how would they receive his first selection?

At last he finished, and all exhausted, the tears streaming down his cheeks, he groped for a chair. Then the applause broke forth.

"That boy will amount to something," cried one of the older gentlemen of the company. "Mark my words, he will succeed."

The speaker of these prophetic

words was Jens Baggesen, one of the most celebrated poets of his time.

"I think so too," another gentleman, the composer Weyse, declared. "We must do something for that boy. I have been poor and friendless myself, and I know what it means. I'll head a subscription for him."

"I'll give him vocal training gratis," Mr. Siboni himself added.

There was no happier boy than Hans Christian Andersen in Copenhagen that evening, nor any more grateful one. His joy kept him awake till far in the night, for hours after he had expressed his thankfulness to God in prayer. Now he could write the good news to his mother and the kind people in Odense who had "chipped in" the fourteen rix dollars that were the means of his reaching

Copenhagen. It was all so wonderful.

After moving into permanent quarters, the boy commenced his studies in vocal culture under Professor Siboni. Enthusiastic and diligent, he naturally made good progress. He seized every opportunity to make new acquaintances and to gain the sympathy of those he came into contact with. You had only to say a kind word to him, or to listen to his talk with pleasant patience and Hans would count you his friend and open his whole heart to you. In a surprisingly short time he had become almost a familiar figure, a sort of boy-about-town at the capital. Hundreds of people knew about young Andersen, the Odense lad, to whom Director Siboni was giving vocal lessons without pay, and who was being helped

by such men as Baggesen and Weyse.

Then came the fateful hour when Hans' voice failed, lost its silvery cadence and sweetness. He could sing no longer. There was no more music in his throat than in a crow's "caw, caw."

"Oh well, if I can't be an opera singer, I may perhaps become an actor," thought young Andersen, undismayed.

Thanks to the recommendation of Professor Frederick Guldberg, a brother of the Odense colonel, who admired the boy's energy and talent, Hans secured free instruction in dramatic art by an excellent teacher, Lindberg by name. However, this tutor was not long in discovering that his pupil would never make a good actor. His ungainly figure, his awk-

ward movements, his homely features —for these natural disadvantages there was no help.

"Heaven only knows what you are to be," said Mr. Lindberg. "One thing is certain, you are not fitted for the stage."

All this time, of course, our friend had been living on charity. A number of kind men had pledged themselves to contribute a small sum monthly for his support, but the money thus collected barely sufficed to keep him in board and lodging. It was seldom that he could afford to eat three decent meals a day. At times a bun and a cup of tasteless coffee represented his breakfast, while for dinner he got nothing more than a plate of barley soup or porridge to a glass of skimmed milk.

But Hans did not allow poverty to make him negligent or slip-shod as to his dress. Every morning he brushed his clothing most carefully. If a thread in the cheap fabric of his coat or trousers had turned white, instantly he would dye it black with ink. He even mended his shoes, darned his stockings, patched his shirts, whenever necessary. He had to wear the same suit of clothes for so long that he outgrew it, so that he could hardly button his coat and did not dare to swing his arms freely or stoop lest some seam should rip. Thus hampered in his movements he looked more awkward than ever, but he would rather have people ascribe his ungainliness to his body than know the secret.

After being dismissed by Mr. Lind-

berg the plucky young fellow made application to enter the dancing school that was and is still attached to the Royal Theatre. This school prepares its pupils for the ballet, which is an important function of this playhouse. His application granted, Hans set about his task with renewed vigor, persevering till he received a part in the chorus of a ballet called *Armida,* on which occasion his name appeared on the programme for the first time.

Although he considered this a rare privilege and one of which he was duly proud, the boy realized that his instructor was right in warning him that he would never rise above the menial position of a "super." So now, having regained his voice, he caused himself to be transferred to the

chorus school. Here his fellow pupils abused and maltreated him despicably at the rehearsals. They would throw pinches of snuff into his mouth while he was singing, jostled and tripped him, and if he threatened to complain to the management, a slap in the face would be their answer. They made life miserable for him to such an extent that he all but lost hope. How could his companions be so unkind, especially when he did absolutely nothing to incur their disfavor? Were they jealous of him? Or was it merely because they found him ridiculous—found mean pleasure in seeing him weep when they bullied him, and because he would not mingle with them as freely as they desired. Then it happened at the close of the season, in 1822, that Hans Christian Andersen got his

discharge from the chorus school of the Royal Theatre.

How did he take this dire discouragement? Did he sit down, with folded arms and bemoan his fate? Did he decide that he had better give up his high aims and turn back to the easy walks of life, to become a tailor, for instance, as his mother and others had advised him to in days gone by? Did he for one moment abandon his purpose or tremble under the conviction that his dream of fame was foolish, unattainable?

He did not. Although for want of lodgings he had spent many a night on the benches in the parks, although his body had suffered sorely from the winter's cold, although he had lived on dry bread and water for periods of time seemingly endless, he

never lost sight of the goal, he pushed on, he persevered.

As we know, Hans made it a point to enlarge his circle of acquaintances continually. It was almost a mania with him to take people into his confidence. He never hesitated to tell, even to a person he had met for the first time, the story of his struggles and all about the laurels he expected to gain. In most cases, however, he reaped only disappointment for his frankness. Frequently, after hearing him out, his supposed well-wishers would turn their backs on him and laugh derisively. Mistaking his honest pride for silly vanity, they judged him a conceited fool. Even Professor Guldberg so considered him.

That well-meaning old gentleman had lost his faith in Hans the moment

our friend began to write, which the boy did with serious intent a few months prior to his dismissal from the chorus school. He wrote and submitted to the Royal Theatre a long five-act tragedy, which was promptly rejected. Immediately afterward he composed a second tragedy. This he read to the pastor of the church he attended, the Rev. Mr. Gutfeld. Mr. Gutfeld thought so well of this play that he wrote a letter recommending it to the board of directors of the Royal Theatre. Six weeks later (it took Hans but two weeks to write it) the manuscript came back.

"Never mind," Mr. Gutfeld encouraged, "I am sure you will succeed as an author. I am going to introduce you to Chancellor Jonas Collin, of whom you have heard. He

is one of the directors of the theatre, and even though he couldn't accept your play, I am sure he found it a meritorious piece of work for a boy of your age, without an education. Besides, Chancellor Collin is noted for his kind acts. He will understand you, and help you. Just wait and see."

Young Andersen did not have to wait long. Good luck was ready to knock at his door. His three years of hardships were drawing to a close.

In due time Hans appeared before Chancellor Collin, the man in whom he was to find a second father, a guardian, a protector.

"I understand that you have never had the benefit of proper schooling," said Mr. Collin. "You should not expect to be able to write plays for the

stage before you have gone through a course of study. Now how would you like to enter some Latin school?"

"Oh, that's what I've wanted to do for years," Hans cried, his eyes gleaming with hope. "But I've never had the means."

"Well," Mr. Collin continued, "I think something ought to be done for you, and I will bring your case before King Frederick without delay. Possibly I can induce him to grant you an annuity large enough to defray your most necessary expenses while you are studying."

A few days later the hopeful lad received notice that Mr. Collin's efforts in his behalf had met with success. Also that the Board of Public Education had agreed to grant him free tuition at the Latin school at

Slagelse, a little place situated about fifty miles east of Copenhagen.

It would be hard to describe our friend's feelings when he received those glad tidings. He now realized that he was out of the crooked tangled paths that led nowhere, and in the straight road to achievement, to success. His earliest, perhaps his fondest, hope fulfilled, he felt an immense gratitude toward God and all men. He readily forgave the persons who had wronged him—Madame Schall, his former landlady, the rough fellows of the chorus school, and all the rest. Indeed in his extreme joy he could scarce resist the impulse to impart even to these the news of his bright prospects. He was so jubilant that he felt like embracing the whole world.

So, in the fall of 1822, we find Hans

Christian Andersen, now seventeen and a half years of age, a student at Slagelse, boarding and lodging at the home of a certain Mrs. Henneberg. As soon as the cobbler's son was fairly settled in his new quarters, he began to look about for pleasant companionship. A glance or two convinced him that he was not easily going to make friends among his class-mates, boys all younger than himself, noisy, mischievous, unruly fellows. To them he appeared a prig, because he would express his disapproval at some of their pranks, one of which was to study their lessons "on the sly" during church service. Whenever he attempted to show them that such conduct was wicked they would scornfully advise him to do as they did or "mind his own affairs."

Mrs. Henneberg proved a fine boarding mistress. For a paltry consideration she gave Hans good food aplenty as well as a snug warm bed to sleep in. The boy was entirely pleased with his stay at her home, although he dreadfully missed—especially during the first two or three months—the crowded streets and interesting sights of Copenhagen. Here there were no famous men for him to meet, no elegant homes to visit, nothing unusual to look at.

Young Andersen spent the Christmas holidays at the capital. They were pleasant days of course, passed as they were among well-wishers and friends. But his Easter vacation was to be the unforgetable time of his life, finding him at home in Odense, after three and a half years of absence.

Mrs. Andersen was again a widow, her second husband having died the previous year. All his wearing apparel and tools had to be sold to help pay the funeral expenses. Their household effects were appraised at nine dollars, and consisted of a bedstead, some tattered bed clothes, a small table, two rickety chairs, an old pine-wood chest, some damaged porcelain and glasses, together with a few articles of clothing. So it will be seen that the cobbler's widow could hardly have been left in a more wretched state at the hour of her husband's death.

Her home was now with her old crazy father-in-law, Hans' grandfather. How the wan features of the poor mother lighted up with joy when she came to stand face to face

with her beloved boy again. Always proud of him, her strange nature fairly overflowed with gratification now. She could not wait to hear him tell all the stories of his experiences. She wanted to run out and call the neighbors in to see what a fine lad Hans had grown to be.

"They thought you would never amount to anything," she exclaimed, "but now they shall see for themselves."

And when young Andersen passed through the streets of his neighborhood, people would open their windows, put out their heads and say to each other:

"Look, that's the cobbler's boy, who is now studying at the King's expense. I would never have thought it, would you?"

"Too bad his old grandmother is dead," another would declare, "for she simply adored that boy."

Hans did not spend a great deal of time with his mother, however. It was not that his fear of his crazy old grandfather still quivered in him, but he was literally swamped with invitations to visit the homes of well-wishers and friends. They were all eager to see him again and give themselves the pleasure of entertaining him. Nobody laughed or jeered at him now. Nobody snickered when he told that he still expected to be famous before very, very long. On the contrary, Odense had begun to believe in the ability of Hans Christian Andersen.

One day, in company with members of the families of the Bishop and Colonel Höegh Guldberg, leaders in

society, our friend took a sail down the Odense Aa. This stream is over a mile long, and in places about thirty feet wide. Through open fields it flows out and around the beautiful woods called "Lady's Beeches," which, like a long tender arm, it half embraces.

This delightful outing with persons of such high station in life seemed to Hans a supreme privilege. There came a day, as we shall see, when the palaces of kings were opened to him, when he could call himself the friend of three or four monarchs, when rare public honors were conferred upon him, when he could feel that he was not only one of the most famous men in the world, but undoubtedly one of the most beloved. And yet no happiness that ever en-

tered his heart in after life could quite equal the utter joy he felt on that excursion down the stream with the Bishop and the Colonel and their wives and well-bred, handsomely-dressed children.

"Of such good fortune," he exclaimed to his mother, who had tears of pride in her eyes, "I never dreamed when I was the ugly duckling."

Let us now have a look inside the Slagelse Latin School. How did Hans get on with his teachers, and what sort of men were they? What sort of a student was he?

If our friend had had a hundred enemies, and if these, putting their wicked heads together, had conspired to inflict upon their victim some extreme polite torture, they would hardly have been able to serve their design

better than by sending him to this very academy.

Simon Meisling—that was the name of the head-master—was a shabby, mean, vindictive, brutal, unclean, red-headed wretch. He could scold like an old hag, roar like a wild beast, rave like a mad dog. He treated his pupils as though they were his slaves. While he had no favorites, and while no one entirely escaped the fire and rain of his wrath, it was at Hans Christian Andersen that he hurled his vilest words and aimed the sharpest arrows of his taunts. Loafer, good-for-nothing, dunce, blockhead, idiot, fool—these are some of the mildest invectives Simon Meisling delighted in applying to our friend.

"Ha, you long legged lubber," he shrieked one day when, as it hap-

pened, young Andersen had mistaken an iota for an epsilon while conjugating some Greek verb. "You have the audacity to twist around your teacher's questions. You deserve such a crack over your head that it would knock you silly."

And when tears began to gather in the sensitive boy's eyes and trickle down his cheeks, the head-master snickered:

"Wipe them dry on a brick. That would be poetic."

Witnesses have told how, when Hans got up to recite before the irate man, his knees would tremble so that the whole bench shook behind him. He had a mortal fear of Simon Meisling. It is hard to see how he could help despising or hating this tyrant, who was the cause of many of his life's

most miserable days. Again and again, after some fresh display of temper on the head-master's part, our friend sat down to write and tell Chancellor Collin all about his troubles. And he did write more than once about the matter, but he never reported the worst humiliations he had suffered, and Mr. Collin, unable to believe that things could really be so bad as Hans described them, would reply:

"Don't get discouraged. I am sure Mr. Meisling means well by you. Keep a stiff upper lip now and work hard."

There is not much to be said favorable to the corps of instructors under Simon Meisling. The tutor in Danish was an old fogy, crabbed and irritable. The history and geography teacher knew his subjects but was a tyrant

like Meisling. The man who taught mathematics was a hopeless drunkard. Finally, the language master was very poor and could not keep order in his classes.

Hans had to study hard to keep up with his classmates. They were in school reading text books all the while that he was going through various experiences at Copenhagen, and naturally they had an immense advantage over him. But young Andersen struggled on bravely, denying himself nearly every pleasure that might have made his heart a little lighter. He was fond of mathematics and history, but he could never master his Latin. A girl of his own age, helped him now and then with his French and German, subjects at which he did fairly well. Hans rewarded her by

giving her copies of the verses he wrote. For verses and stories he *would* write—late at night, too, when practically every one of Slagelse's two thousand inhabitants was fast asleep.

Two years had passed when, in the fall of 1825, Simon Meisling suddenly asked Hans to come and live with him.

"But I'm quite satisfied with the treatment I receive at Mrs. Henneberg's," Hans replied, at loss to know just what the head-master meant by offering to take him into his home.

"Yes, but you see I want you to have the full benefit of such private tutoring as I can give you," the principal insisted. "We won't charge you one penny more than you are paying Mrs. Henneberg for board and lodging and you may be sure my wife will be like a mother to you."

What in the world had happened to Mr. Meisling? Did he feel remorse of heart and was he going to try to right the wrongs he had done his poor pupil?

After some hesitation, our friend entered (as we may say) the lion's den. This risky step he took at the end of October, 1825. For several months the Meislings seemed to vie with each other in being nice to Hans. The head-master's ways were transformed as if by a miracle He was polite, considerate, patient. He made puns, told funny anecdotes and helped Hans to prepare his lessons for the next day. Mrs. Meisling treated Hans like a son (she had no children), flattered him, showed him every kindness. I am not sure but she even praised his verses.

What wonder then, that when Simon Meisling applied for and was appointed to the head-mastership of the Latin school at Helsingör, or Elsinore, a place about fifty miles north of Copenhagen, young Andersen readily accepted his offer to go along.

The following letter which Hans wrote to a friend, one Emil Hundrup, of Slagelse, son of a hospital surgeon there, shortly after having been installed in the new school, explains itself.

"Dear Friend: Matters are in a very bad state with me. Though I get much better marks here than I got at Slagelse, Meisling was never so dissatisfied with me as he is at present. Never have I felt so unhappy, never have I so distrusted myself. I am worthless and good for nothing,

and will never amount to anything—never!"

The head-master had again begun to look daggers at him, abuse him after his old fashion and make him the scapegoat and laughing stock of the whole school. Hans would be so confused in recitations before Meisling that, although he knew his lessons to perfection, he lost all control over himself and frequently gave most foolish answers to the principal's questions, at which the latter would of course rave worse than ever. If he complained that the wretched room he occupied in the Meisling's home was so cold that he could scarcely sleep or study in it, Mrs. Meisling would severely rebuke him, even before strangers, saying that she was losing money on him, and that he

ought to be glad he had any roof over his head at all.

The climax came one day in the spring of 1827. During a visit to Copenhagen Hans had read one of his latest poems, entitled *The Dying Child*, to a number of his friends, who thought it very beautiful and praised it highly. Meisling, somehow, heard of this, and one evening while young Andersen was poring over his books in his room, the rude man—without knocking of course—entered:

"Let me look at that last poem of yours, Andersen," he demanded.

Hans instantly began to tremble, knowing the head-master's violent aversion to his practice of writing.

"I've heard some one say that it's pretty good," Simon Meisling went on, "and if that be really the case,

I'll forgive you for composing verses altogether. Yes, if there's a single spark of merit in it I'll forgive you, and never reproach you for writing poems again."

Our friend grew hopeful, for he knew that he had never written anything more beautiful than *The Dying Child*. As he handed the verses to the head-master, he offered up a silent prayer to God that Simon Meisling might like it. Anxiously he studied the features of his persecutor while the latter was reading the paper. He was not kept in suspense for long.

"Do you call this poetry?" the principal roared, flinging the poem away. "This stupid, sentimental rot! This silly foppery! This rubbish!"

And he went on to abuse Hans more mercilessly, more cruelly than

ever. Young Andersen bore it all without a murmur, though his heart was wrung with agony. However, the next day he wrote a long letter to Mr. Collin, in which he implored to be removed from Meisling's school. He spoke plainly this time of how ill he was being treated.

As soon as he had read that letter, the boy's benefactor communicated with one of the teachers of the Latin school, who informed him that Hans' statements as to the head-master's disgraceful conduct toward him were all true. Then, without delay, Mr. Collin hurried to Elsinore and took young Andersen away with him to Copenhagen, where he engaged a private tutor for his grateful young friend. And so, in October, 1828, at the age of twenty-three, Hans Chris-

tian Andersen, proud, self-reliant and happy again, passed his entrance examinations to the University of Copenhagen.

III

Through Foreign Lands

III

Through Foreign Lands

ABOUT a year after his enrollment as a college student, Andersen published (at his own expense) a little humorous book which met with immediate, extraordinary success. The most important publisher in Copenhagen purchased the rights for a second edition, and soon a third printing was made necessary. By that time the author had had a play produced on the stage of the Royal Theatre, and in 1830 he issued a volume of poems. All these performances served to fatten his purse considerably, as well as helped to establish his reputation as a writer, to say nothing of

how they cheered his spirit. Fame was the prize he had set his heart upon, and that prize now seemed close at hand.

"All homes began to be open to me," he writes in his Autobiography. "I flew from circle to circle in happy self-contentment. I liked to listen to the sounding bell of praise. I had such an overflow of youth and happiness. Life lay bright with sunshine before me."

But Hans was of a roving disposition—a veritable bird of passage. Like his father, he longed to visit foreign countries, to observe strange customs, see unfamiliar sights, come into contact with thousands of people and store his mind continually with fresh impressions. Switzerland, Germany, France, Italy—he would explore these

lands as he had already explored Copenhagen. He would climb the Alps, sail down the Rhine, mingle with gay Parisian crowds, tread the crusted lava of Mount Vesuvius, enjoy Florentine and Roman holidays, visit theatres, art galleries, museums—in short he would let nothing escape his eye that could tend to educate or inspire him.

Early in 1833, after the publication of a book of poetry, *The Twelve Months of the Year,* which the king had graciously permitted the author to dedicate to him, Andersen decided to go and present a copy of this book to Frederick VI, to whom, as he says, he "looked up with true reverence and heartfelt gratitude."

Hans confided his project to a friend who, knowing how anxious the

young man was to go abroad, and how his plans depended on the possibility of the king's granting him a so-called stipend for travelling—thus advised him:

"When you present the king with a copy of your book," said Andersen's well-wisher, who was thoroughly familiar with the routine of such matters, "tell him briefly and clearly who you are. Tell him that, since becoming a student you have made your way alone; that travel will, more than anything else, serve to complete your education. Then the king will probably tell you to submit your petition, which you are to have with you, and thereupon you will hand it to him."

"I think it monstrous," Hans replied, "that at the same moment when

I give him a copy of my book, I should ask a favor of him."

"That's the way," his friend laughed. "The king is very well aware that you are giving him the book in order to ask for something."

"This made me almost desperately angry," Hans tells us, but on his companion's insisting that there was no other effective means, the young author gave in. Let us hear his own description of the audience with Frederick VI.

"The audience must have been very comical indeed. My heart was beating with fear, and when the king, in his peculiar manner, stepped abruptly toward me and asked me what book I was bringing him, I answered:

" 'A cycle of poems.'

"'A cycle—cycle—what do you mean?'

"Then I became quite disconcerted and said:

"'It is some verses to Denmark.'

"The King smiled.

"'Well, well, it is very good, thank you,' and so he nodded and dismissed me. But as I had not yet begun on my real errand, I told him that I had still something more to say to him; and now, without hesitation, I spoke of my studies and how I had gone through them. 'That is all very praiseworthy,' said the king. And when I reached the point of a stipend for travelling, he answered as I had been told he would:

"'Well, send me your petition.'

"'Yes, sire,' exclaimed I, in all simplicity, 'I have it with me. But

it seems to me so dreadful that I should bring it along with the book. I have been told that I ought to do so, that it was the proper thing to do, but I find it so dreadful; it is not like me.' And tears rushed from my eyes. The good king laughed heartily, nodded in a friendly fashion, and took the petition. I made a bow and ran away at full speed."

In due time Andersen's petition was granted, and on Monday, April 22d, 1833, he left Copenhagen for his first long journey abroad, to be gone for sixteen months. Let us accompany him here and there on the way.

After brief stops at Hamburg, Cassel and Frankfort, Hans reached the Rhine at the city of Mainz, where he climbed into a heavy, clumsy stage-coach, bound for Paris. Tired and

sleepy, from a comfortless seventy-hour ride, he entered the French capitol on the 10th of May.

Paris was like one huge World's Fair to Andersen—a vast tangle of too-much-to-see. Enthusiastic, wide-awake, he hurried from attraction to attraction—so fast indeed that his memory failed to preserve distinct impressions. And of course he called on famous men—Victor Hugo, the author, Cherubini, the composer, and other celebrities, from whom he secured autographs for his scrap-book.

It was with a blended sense of pride and self-consciousness that he would stroll down the Champs Elysee of a pleasant afternoon—he, Hans Christian, only son of Andersen, the Odense cobbler. As yet he had written none of the immortal fairy-

tales that were destined to be translated into every living language and read by millions; as yet his name was unknown outside of Scandinavia. Nevertheless four or five of his country's greatest men had agreed that he was a *true* poet, and being a true poet he would surely become a famous one. Less than fourteen years had elapsed since the memorable day of his last affectionate parting with his old grandmother on the outskirts of Odense, when he set out to make his mark in the world. Even now, at times, her tearful "God be with you, my lad" sounded in his ears.

None of all the sights he beheld in France moved him so deeply as his visit to the palace at Versailles, the former home of Napoleon. He entered the edifice with bated breath,

feeling as though he was stepping upon holy ground. Admiration and reverence kindled his blood; these were the familiar haunts of the conquering Corsican — his father's hero and his own. In that chair he had sat, at that table! By that window he had stood — dreaming, perhaps, of new triumphs. In the beautiful halls the echo of his voice seemed to linger still, with a sense of its owner's presence. Had he not received his generals there and discussed grave matters of state?

"I entered Napoleon's bed chamber with pious feelings," Hans writes. "All was there in the same state as when he inhabited it. The walls had yellow tapestry and the bed yellow curtains. A little stairway led up to the latter article. I laid my hand on

one of the steps that had been touched by his foot. I touched the pillow where his head had lain. If I had been alone, I surely should have knelt by the bed. I looked up to him as a Roman Catholic to his saint."

Twelve years previous to this, as we may remember, Napoleon had died in captivity, weary and alone, on the island of St. Helena.

The beginning of August found Hans travelling across the plains of France toward the Jura Mountains. As the rumbling diligence was passing through a little village, late in the evening, the driver suddenly drew up his horses, and the next moment Andersen, who for several hours had been his only passenger, saw, or rather heard, him (for it was pitch dark) assist two young girls into the vehicle.

"If we do not let them drive with us, they will be obliged to walk four or five miles over this lonely road," explained the driver. "I believe in being nice to farmer's daughters of these parts and I hope you won't object to having them for company."

"Not at all," Hans—ever polite to ladies—replied, trying in vain to peer through the darkness and catch a glimpse of the faces of his two fellow-passengers, who indeed were straining their eyes to distinguish his features. Failing utterly in this, they began to whisper and titter vivaciously. Such carryings on greatly amused the man from the north. He understood that they were curious to know something about him, but he decided to keep quiet in the darkest

corner of the compartment and let them speak first. Finally one of the young women asked Hans if he was a Frenchman.

"No," Andersen replied, "I come from Denmark."

At this, speaking in chorus, they began to assure their invisible companion that they knew Denmark, from top to bottom, from their geography. Denmark, they insisted, was a part of Norway, as was Copenhagen, which they pronounced *Corporal.* Hans could hardly refrain from giggling at the serious and enthusiastic way in which the farmer's daughters displayed their ignorance. Yet it was grand sport to sit there and listen to their merry chatter, as the diligence kept rolling on through the thick darkness, over the lonely moun-

tain roads. Little by little, Anderson caught the spirit of their playfulness, so that when they asked him if he was young, and married, and how he looked, he readily responded.

"Am I young? Yes. Married, alas, no. As for my personal appearance, young ladies, I am considered one of the handsomest men Denmark ever bred. I am tall, broad-shouldered, strong and fearless. I have some resemblance to the vikings of old, only, of course, I am more gentle. Once seen, my countenance is never to be forgotten. And now, pray give me a description of your looks. You are both beautiful, of course?

"More than beautiful!" the gay peasant girls cried, and when Hans had heard their fanciful verbal sketch of their charms he agreed that they

must, indeed, be the belles of the environment.

"But here's our station. Won't you please step out into the light, Mr. Stranger, and let us have a look at your face?"

"I wish I could oblige you," Andersen stammered evasively, thinking probably of his unhandsomely large nose which helped to make the line of his features so irregular, "but really I'd rather not. Please excuse me."

Standing in the door of the diligence they covered their faces with their handkerchiefs.

"Well, you shan't see ours then. Good-bye, Mr. Unkown Man from Corporal, *bon voyage*."

With a final merry laugh they vanished into the night and the traveller was again alone in the vehicle.

Andersen remained for some time in various Swiss cities, principally in Le Locle, the home of watch-makers, situated thousands of feet above the seas. Here he finished a new poetic play, *Agnete and the Merman,* September the fourth. This work, however, only brought him disappointment and regret from Denmark, instead of praise and admiration.

A few days later the traveller was crossing the Simplon mountains and moving toward Italy, the country of his longing. The sight of the magnificent scenery filled his heart with rapture. He wrote in his diary.

"What grandeur of nature! Our heavily laden coach with its team of horses was like a fly on a giant block of stone. We crept along the rocky road which, at Napoleon's command,

had broken through this spine of the earth. The glass-green glaciers glistened above us; it grew colder and colder. The shepherds were wrapped in cowhides and the inns kept up good fires in their stoves. Here it was full winter, but in a few minutes the coach was moving on beneath chestnut trees, whose long green leaves glittered in the warm sunshine. Lake Maggiore loomed between the dark-blue mountains; beautiful islets, like bouquets, floated upon the water; but it was cloudy; the skies were grey, as in Denmark. When evening came all was again whiffed away. The air shone transparent and serene, and the skies seemed to float thrice as high as at home. The vines hung in long trails along the road, as for a festival. Never since have I seen Italy so beautiful."

At Genoa, to which town Hans hurried after having seen Milan with its famous cathedral, he availed himself of an opportunity to visit the Arsenal, where the galley-slaves, then about six hundred in number, lived and worked, and where all the horrors of prison life were revealed to him. He inspected the inner prisons, the dormitories with large barrack beds along the walls, furnished with heavy iron chains to which the poor victims were attached on retiring for the night. Even in the sick-rooms, some of the prisoners were in chains. Three prisoners in particular made a dreadful impression on Andersen. They observed his emotion, and one of them looked at him threateningly as if to say:

"I know that you are here merely

out of curiosity to see our misery. I despise you and all such as you."

And he gave vent to coarse laughter, half rising in the bed, and fixing his eyes upon Andersen with a diabolical stare that chilled the Dane to the marrow.

On October the eighteenth, at noon, Hans entered Rome, the Eternal City, where he "was soon to feel as if he had been born there and was in his own house."

Andersen lost no time in calling upon certain illustrious fellow-countrymen, who received him with great kindness, and chaperoned him through the town. He walked and talked with his famous compatriot, Bertel Thorwaldsen, the sculptor, a statue of whom, by the way, may be found in Central Park, New York.

He spent many a pleasant and profitable hour in the company of Ludvig Bödtcher, a celebrated Danish poet, who had resided in Rome for ten years, and who had practically become an adopted son of Italy. Yet another Danish companion from whose friendship Hans derived much benefit was one Albert Küchler, then a painter, but who, sometime afterwards, gave up the pursuit of art to become a mendicant friar, a Franciscan monk, assuming the name of Pietro di Sante Pio. As such, he once wandered barefooted hundreds of miles through Germany to a poor monastery.

At the end of his first month in Rome, Hans reckoned that he had visited one hundred churches, all of which contained works of art. "But

there are several hundred more to be seen," he writes to a friend in Denmark. He was very happy, and anything but homesick. The sights he saw charmed and thrilled him by turns. He wandered for an hour among the catacombs, his little lamp throwing ghostly shadows on the ground beneath which the bodies of thirteen thousand saints are said to be buried. "Another interesting but terrible place I visited was the nethermost cellar of a Capuchin monastery. Here we pass through six chapels, whose ceilings and walls are artificially constructed out of the skulls of deceased monks. The altars, even the candle-sticks are fashioned out of human bones. In the niches of skull by skull, sit whole skeletons enveloped in cowls and holding a book or a

bouquet of flowers in the hand."

The days passed swiftly, none of them finding Hans either weary or idle, but constantly bent on acquiring new knowledge. Rome, he believed, could teach him more in two months than Denmark in many years. There was an immense educational value in the treasures of art, to whose appeal he eagerly responded. Before such divine things as the frescoes of Michaelangelo in the Sistine Chapel, or Canova's sculptures, or Raphael's paintings, he recognized, with fervent humility, the diminutive character of his own powers. This feeling almost drove him to despair, almost crushed his courage, and there were hours when he was at the point of actually abandoning his chosen vocation.

Then one day, thus depressed in spirit, he learned through a letter from Chancellor Collin of the death of his old mother, at distant Odense. His first exclamation was:

"O God, I thank Thee! Now her poverty is at an end, and I could not relieve her from it!"

Yet it was very hard for him to grow familiar with the thought that he now possessed not a single relation in the world who would love him because he was of the same kith and kin. He wept bitterly, not only with the sense of his loss, but also with the deep regret that he had been unable to make her last days bright and free from sorrow. He wrote to Chancellor Collin: "She was weak and helpless. You cannot know how many tears her plight has made me

weep, since I was utterly unable to help her. She did not live to receive my last letter from Rome, but I know that she prayed for me at her last hour and blessed me."

Anne Marie Andersen died in the happy belief that her son had grown famous.

From Rome, Hans journeyed to Naples. The change of scene brought on a healthful change of heart for the traveller. He heard again the voice of his ambition (and of his genius), new literary plans began to take shape in his head and his fingers to itch for the touch of the pen. It was about this time that he conceived the idea of writing his long novel, *The Improvisatore,* the first of his productions to be translated into our language. So high did young An-

dersen's spirits run, when he ascended Mount Vesuvius, that — tramping ankle-deep in ashes — he sang one of his friend Weyse's tunes at the top of his lungs and won the race to the summit from all of his fellow-excursionists. As he often said, his pain was awful whenever he suffered, but likewise his joy knew no bounds whenever he was happy.

Spring came, and Andersen turned his face northward and homeward. Of course, it was his purse and not his heart that determined this decision, for radiant Italy had now become his second fatherland. Would he ever be able to return to it? He thought not; he says that he was sure he should never again see the beautiful country he was about to depart from. No wonder then, that his

heart grew heavy at such a sorrowful thought.

He reached the Austrian frontier, where, according to the regulations of those times, all travellers were compelled to have their passports examined before they could proceed across the boundary. Andersen's passport was written in French. When the frontier guard had looked at it, he enquired Hans' name.

"Hans Christian Andersen," the author replied.

"That name is not in your passport," retorted the guard, somewhat gruffly. "So you travel under an assumed name!"

The traveller attempted to explain, but he was instantly informed that a thorough examination of all his effects, even to the clothing he wore,

would have to be made. Why? Well, Austria was on the look-out for suspicious persons, revolutionists, anarchists, conspirators against the government, of whatever sort. The order had come from Emperor Franz himself.

And now the inspector began to rummage through Andersen's trunk, hauling out and scrutinizing each separate article. Concerning his numerous keep-sakes, the author was questioned at great length, and as to his letters, the inspector made him declare on oath that they contained nothing of interest to anyone but himself. Hans stood by, half-amused, half-annoyed, but said not a word. Would the ridiculous ordeal never end.

"Where did this come from," the

officer demanded, fishing out an ivy wreath, which Andersen had kept from a Christmas celebration in Rome.

He told him.

"Have you been in Paris?" asked the officer for the fourth or fifth time.

"I have."

"Some dangerous revolutionists come from Paris."

"That may be," the author now spoke up," but let me tell you that I'm not one of them. On the contrary I'm a true friend of law and order, I hate insurrections and I have only the highest esteem for your Emperor. In fact I'm a tiptop sort of a subject, through and through."

This carried no weight whatever with the inspector, who continued

his search through Andersen's effects, till he had examined every particle of them, and all because a stupid clerk at Copenhagen had translated the Danish name Hans Christian by the French, Jean Chrétien. Who ever heard of a Jean Chrétien Andersen?

On arriving home, in August, 1834, Hans hastened to accept an invitation to visit an old friend, the reverend Ingemann, at Sorö, a beautiful country place, near Slagelse. Here, in a little attic chamber, among fragrant lime-trees, he completed *The Improvisatore*. In the dedication he wrote:

"To the Conference Councillor Collin and his noble wife, in whom I found parents — whose children were brothers and sisters to me, whose house was my home — do I

hereby give the best of which I am possessed."

The Improvisatore, whose hero, *Antonio*, is Andersen himself, was translated into Swedish, German, English, Russian, Bohemian, French and Dutch, a recognition that had been accorded to no other Scandinavian author before him and that few have enjoyed since.

IV

In the World of Children

IV

In the World of Children

AS a very young man Hans Christian Andersen does not seem to have been very fond of children. He felt ill at ease and shy in their company, believing as he did that they considered him a sort of crank, stupidly ignorant of, and quite unable to appreciate, the sports and pleasures of the golden age. For this mistaken notion of his, we are obliged to blame to a great extent his personal appearance. Hans did not look the least bit like the kind of person for whom children are prone to form an early attachment. Extremely tall, with drooping, nar-

row shoulders, a long, lean, oldish face, deep-set eyes, a very large nose, and feet almost huge,—the cobbler's son was anything but a handsome youth. And he was himself well aware of the fact. Had not his schoolmates at Odense and Slagelse incessantly ridiculed his ungainly frame and homely features? Had he not been bullied and hazed for the same reason by his fellow pupils of the chorus school?

However, as he approached manhood, the expression of his face changed greatly. A kindly light crept into his eyes—never to fail, a playful smile harbored itself about his mouth, his cheeks took on flesh, his nose seemed to grow smaller, and he shook off a good deal of his stubborn awkwardness of manner.

In short, at thirty, when he wrote and published his first collection of fairy-tales, Hans Christian Andersen, smartly-dressed as he invariably tried to be, was really a pretty good looking fellow.

It was about this time that the author met one of the most delightful children in all his experience, little Ida Thiele. She was the daughter of Mr. J. M. Thiele, a secretary of the Academy of Art. Hans had known her father for ten years; indeed Mr. Thiele was one of those generous men who had supplied him with money to keep him in board and lodging, after his memorable "success" at Prof. Siboni's, of which event we have heard.

During his student days Andersen

was a frequent visitor at Mr. Thiele's home and no member of the household welcomed him more heartily than did little Ida. She would seize every opportunity to get him away into some remote corner where they could entertain each other undisturbed. Always, she had some little matter to confide to him, or some strange question to ask. Hans would then take the child upon his knee, and looking into her bright, beautiful face, feel unspeakably happy.

"My poor flowers are quite dead," said little Ida one day. "They were so pretty last night, and now they are all faded. What makes them do that? Look!" and she showed her friend a whole bouquet which was entirely withered.

"I'll tell you what ails them," Hans replied, "you see, the flowers attended a ball last night, which kept them up till very late. That's why they hang their heads so."

"But flowers can't dance," little Ida exclaimed in surprise.

The student, not in the least puzzled by the question, put his long arm around the child and leaned back in the sofa. Then, little by little, step by step, he began to explain the mystery, in his own delightful way. Little Ida (she was then only five years of age) listened with rapt attention. It was all so wonderful, and yet, she thought, it must be true.

However, instead of retelling here the story which Hans Christian Andersen told his little friend, and

which he "made up" in answer to her innocent queries, let me rather ask you to read it as it stands to-day, in his own words. It is the fairy tale entitled, *Little Ida's Flowers*, and now you know how it came to be written.

Fifteen years afterwards, Ida Thiele married one Alexander Wilde, a commodore in the Danish navy. She was fairly worshiped by her friends and beloved of all who knew her for her sweet nature overflowing with human kindness. Never did she speak a hard word to any one; never did she do an unkind thing. People were wont to say that she was too good for this world. In 1858, when Hans stood at the topmost height of his fame, the news reached him that

"Little Ida" had passed away. On her tombstone Commodore Wilde caused the following words to be inscribed:

"Her life was like a wanderer's steps upon new-fallen snow. They leave foot-prints but no stains."

At the time of her death, Ida Thiele was only thirty-three years of age. We will remember her as Hans' first friend among little children and the one to whom he told his first, original fairy tale.

Another child in whose company the story-teller spent many delightful hours, was Viggo Drewsen, the five-year old son of Police Commissioner Drewsen. The Commissioner had married a daughter of Chancellor Collin. Viggo was Andersen's ideal of a boy and he

loved him with all the tenderness of his very tender heart. When he was seated with this little fellow on his knee, kissing his rosy cheeks and looking into his deep brown eyes, he felt like a child himself and forgot all the discouragements that embittered his early life. Perhaps you should know that, though his fame and income increased with each new book he produced, Hans Christian Andersen's position was not a very enviable one. His enemies by far outnumbered his friends. With but two or three exceptions, all his fellow craftsmen were jealous of his success. They would snub him on every occasion, calling him a conceited fool, and circulate the meanest, untrue stories about him. This is one of the reasons why the author

so often went abroad. For it was in foreign lands that his lovable qualities both as a man and a writer were most appreciated.

But in the world of children Hans had only admiring, grateful friends, who proved their affection for their favorite story-teller in many delightful ways. For instance, one morning the celebrated man received a long letter from a young student. With the letter was a faded, dry, four-leaved clover. The young student told the following story. As a child he had once heard his mother speak about Andersen's early struggles—the hardships he encountered, the disappointments he met with, and even how on several occasions he had been obliged to spend a night on the benches of

the park, suffering for lack of food. All this came as a great, painful surprise to the little boy, who resolved to do what he could at once to help his unknown friend to succeed. Straightway he went out into the fields near his home, and searched and searched for a four-leaved clover. After a quest, lasting several hours, he finally found the coveted thing. So home he ran to his mother:

"Please send this four-leaved clover to Hans Christian Andersen right away," he said, "it will bring him good luck and happiness."

She promised, of course, and put the clover leaf away in her psalm book. A number of years passed; the boy's mother died and in due time he entered college. There

one day, rummaging through a pile of keepsakes, he opened the old psalm book—and there was the forgotten four-leaved clover!

"I have just been reading your new story, *The Ice Maiden*," the young student concludes his letter, "and read it with the same pleasure that your fairy-tales gave me in my childhood. Fortune has favored you, and you do not need the 'lucky' clover now, but I am sending it nevertheless to tell you of this little incident."

Quite a number of the one hundred and fifty-six fairy tales Hans composed in the course of over forty years are based on some actual occurrence in the author's personal experience.

In the story called *The Old House*

Hans introduces us to an unselfish little boy who gives away one of his two tin soldiers to an old man living quite alone in a dwelling across the street. No visitor ever comes to see this old man, and the child has heard his parents remark that though in comfortable circumstances their unknown neighbor feels very lonely. Hence the boy sacrifices his favorite plaything in order that the old man may have a steadfast companion.

That part of the story has the following origin, which further illustrates the gratitude of certain young folks toward Hans Christian Andersen.

While the author was visiting his friend Julius Mosen, the German poet, at the latter's home at Olden-

burg, Germany, he read four or five of his fairy tales to a group of children, including Mr. Mosen's own little boy who was especially delighted. He could not help wondering, however, if Hans had little boys and girls of his own in far-away Denmark to whom to recite his stories.

"No," said Mr. Mosen, answering the youngster's question, "Hans Andersen is a bachelor, and he has hardly any home at all."

"But isn't he very lonely, then, papa?

"Yes, I think he is," the father truthfully replied.

The next day, shortly before the hour Hans had set for his departure, the urchin went to his father and handed him a tin soldier in Turkish uniform. This he asked Mr. Mosen

to deliver to their famous guest as a token of his appreciation. The German poet tried in vain to persuade the boy that Hans would be even more gratified to receive the gift from the hands of its giver, but the child pleaded bashfulness.

"Your little son has only two tin-soldiers and I am to have one of them!" Andersen exclaimed, deeply moved on receiving the keepsake. "Tell him that I thank him from the bottom of my heart. I shall preserve this present all my life, and it will often cause me to remember your little boy's affection."

And that the Danish author did. In fact, for many years he carried the man of metal on his person, showing it to hundreds of people he met on his journeys.

The Old House contains another incident that is entirely fact, namely the paragraph in which is related the story of a child, who as soon as she hears music or singing, of whatever sort, cannot keep her feet or body still, but must get up and begin to dance. The little girl with this queer habit was Marie Hartmann, the daughter of one of Denmark's greatest composers. She was also among those fortunate children who enjoyed the rare privilege of hearing Hans read, just before bed-time, from his most charming wonder-stories.

Just before bed-time, that was the hour when his little friends began to look for the story-teller to appear in their homes. And that was the time of day he generally chose to entertain them. Often he would come quite

unannounced, mysteriously. The lamp would be lit, the shades drawn, supper over, and lo! the door would open revealing the tall form of Hans Andersen on the threshold. When all were seated and Hans had found a place that suited him, and crossed his long legs, he gave his audience a kind look, raised the book or papers from which he was to read, in his right hand, and let the left one glide slowly upward across his face for a moment, seeming to gather strength, shading his eyes, and remaining motionless. And what a change had taken place in the expression of his face when he removed his hand! His gaze was far-away; he seemed to be unaware of the presence of anyone in the room. No actor, no pro-

fessional "elocutionist" could read *The Little Match Girl*, *The Story of a Mother*, or *The Steadfast Tinsoldier*, so wonderfully as their author himself. Though not fine in itself, Hans' voice sounded like soft strains of music when he read those wonder-stories, and others. He made you feel how he loved them, made you see clearer than ever the beautiful thoughts underneath the words.

While Andersen was always ready to recite his fairy-tales in private circles, he had a stubborn aversion to appearing in public. He trembled at the very idea of standing upon a platform face to face with an audience of strangers. On this account he reluctantly refused scores of invitations to assist at various entertainments arranged for charitable

purposes. Once, at Odense, where he was visiting, one of his dearest friends finally persuaded him to take part in a concert, the net proceeds of which were to go to a local Asylum. On entering the crowded hall, Hans grew feverishly nervous. In his boyhood, he would have thought nothing of marching upon the stage, and giving the audience present a display of his talent; but now it was different. The perspiration stood out on his brow, his knees felt cold, and wobbled, and for a moment, facing the applauding public among whom were peasants who had walked fifteen miles to see him, it seemed that he would collapse from stage fright. The only thing that saved him, at this critical juncture, was the presence of two

little children he knew, who occupied seats in the front row. By keeping his eyes fixed on their beaming faces, Hans managed to imagine that they were the only persons in the hall. The result was most satisfactory, though naturally Hans never wanted to go through such an ordeal again.

A curious incident happened late one afternoon while the author was reading *The Storm Shakes the Signboard* to a group of children and their parents. This story, by the way, is not a fairy-tale at all but a true description of the havoc wrought by a hurricane that swooped down upon Odense in Hans' childhood days.

Andersen had barely uttered the last word of the story when a flash

of lightning zigzagged across the darkened sky. The next instant there was a terrific crash, the force of which shook the whole house, whose occupants, including the author himself, rushed to the windows. Now the deep, angry bass voice of thunder resounded, and the awful blasts of wind that accompanied it, seemed to raise the building from its foundations. Fiercer and fiercer it grew in might, sweeping the road clean in front of the place, and whirling huge clouds of reddish sand high into the air, discoloring bushes and trees, many of which it uprooted bodily.

"My story is reponsible for all this, I suppose," Hans jestingly remarked.

After that, the story-teller never

cared to read *The Storm Shakes the Signboard* to anyone. The mere mention of the title almost made him hear roaring thunder, and beats of tempestuous wind, and see blinding flashes of lightning.

Though Andersen would have resented being called superstitious, he proudly considered himself a sort of mascot. He never tired of talking about his power of bringing good luck to others, or of making some wished-for thing come to pass. At times it really did seem as though he could turn black clouds into blue, call forth King Frost to freeze the ponds over, make snow tumble down from the sky (for the children's sake and at their request of course) simply by snapping his fingers or saying, "Presto!"

One spring he received a long letter from a friend in the country, inviting him to come and spend some time there.

"My children do so long to see you," the writer said. "They are very unhappy these days. For weeks, they have been watching anxiously for the appearance of the stork. I too watch, but no stork comes. Now what can we do? Perhaps you can help us."

"Indeed I can," Hans wrote back, "I'll come, and please tell the children that when I come, the stork will come too. Just wait and see!"

This of course was a big promise, yet it came true. A few hours after the author's arrival, two fine-looking, giant storks were seen flying towards the house, on the roof of

which they immediately began to build their nest.

"Didn't I tell you!" Hans cried, delighted. "What a fine time we are going to have watching those great birds; and now let's go in and I'll tell you my fairy-tale about the storks."

By the time Fame had completely crowned him, there was hardly a child in all Copenhagen who failed to recognize Hans Christian Andersen whenever he walked or drove by in the street. He was as conspicuous a person as the King himself. Queen Amalie often went driving with him, and as their separate carriages came up, crowds of children would gather, shouting:

"Hurrah! There's the Queen! Hurrah! There's Andersen!"

Out for a walk one day, he happened to pass a lady who was holding her two little boys by the hand. Upon seeing the author, one of them, a light blue-eyed chap, broke away and ran straight toward the astonished story-teller.

"Hello," he cried, grasping hold of Andersen's hand.

The boy's mother instantly called him back and began to scold him for accosting a stranger in such a brazen manner.

"He's no stranger, mother," said the child. "That's Hans Andersen; we boys all know him."

Then Hans, with a polite bow, approached to explain that instead of feeling offended, he considered it an honor and a privilege (which was true) to be so well known to

the little children of Copenhagen.

It hardly seems necessary to relate other incidents in further proof of the charming relation that existed between the story-teller and the world of children. We have already seen enough to be able to laugh scornfully at the absurd statements certain men have given out, to the effect that Hans Christian Andersen never cherished any real love for little boys and girls.

V

In Great Britain

V

In Great Britain

ONE morning in the month of May, 1847, Hans stood on the deck of an old Dutch steamboat slowly plodding along up the Thames toward London town. The river was as usual alive with vessels—crowded from bank to bank with yachts and ships of every description and size. The traveler, to whom such a scene of bustle on the water was new, who had never seen the like of it, tried for a while to keep count of the craft as they passed, a pastime of which, however, he soon tired. At Gravesend, the Thames was wrapped in a heavy

cloud of smoke. "It appeared" Andersen tells us, "as if we were entering a smoking marsh on fire, but it was only the smoke from steamships and of chimneys that lay before us."

Overhead hung a low sky, black in places like soot, now and then flashes of lightning played across the heavens, and thunder shook the air, with the noise of cannon.

"People know you are here," said a young Englishman to Hans in jest, "and wish to bid you welcome. This tumult represents their salute."

Not a single person did Hans Christian Andersen know in London and not a single letter of introduction did he have to anyone. A man of high station in Denmark,

who had valuable English connections, had promised to commend the author to the favor of certain members of the British aristocracy, but had failed to keep his word. And there he was, feeling the moment he stepped ashore like a "stranger in a strange land."

Securing lodgings at the Hotel de Sabboniere, then a very modest old-fashioned place, in Leicester Square, not far from Piccadilly, Andersen quickly changed his dress and started out to get a first look at London. Incidentally, we suspect, he was eager to learn to what extent his writings had made him known in this, the world's greatest city. Was he going to have the pleasure of seeing any of his books in the shop windows, he wondered. Or his picture?

He had not walked far before he came up in front of a little bookseller's, in whose show window there was arrayed a row of photographs of celebrated authors: Dickens, Bulwer-Lytton, Grimm, Thackeray, and others. Hans stopped and scanned the portraits. Suddenly his heart gave a leap of joy; his own likeness was with those of the other famous men. Straightway, he entered the shop, and asked to be allowed to examine the picture of himself. As upon several previous occasions of a similar kind, the story-teller decided not to reveal his identity, and as he took the picture and looked at it, he asked innocently:

"Well now, can you tell me, is this a good likeness of Mr. Andersen?"

"Oh yes indeed, sir," the shop-woman declared, "a better one never existed. If you should meet him in the street, you would know him at once by this photograph."

"It's very queer then, hang it, that you don't recognize him, looking him squarely in the face," were the words upon the tip of Andersen's tongue. He was tempted to say who he was, but thought better of it, purchased the article, and somewhat disappointed at the stupidity of the clerk, departed.

The next morning Hans called upon Count Reventlow, the Danish Ambassador, and in the course of this conversation referred to his want of letters of introduction.

"Oh," cried the clever Count, "you will need none here. You are

known and recommended in England by your writings. Let me see, this very evening Lord Palmerston is giving a reception. I shall write to Lady Palmerston that you are in London, and I have no doubt she will invite you to come."

A few hours later, Hans had the pleasure of receiving a formal card of invitation to the function, and in due time Count Reventlow's carriage came for him and the pair drove off together to the fashionable residence of the noted English statesman. We may be sure that Andersen wore his finest evening dress, and the decorations that Christian VIII of Denmark and King William of Prussia had lately presented to him as marks of distinction.

How the diamonds sparkled in

the grand hall where the nobility of all England were gathered! What gowns of silk and lace the ladies wore! And what a lavish display of beautiful flowers!

Lord and Lady Palmerston both received their Danish guest very kindly, and he was soon made to feel quite at home in this scene of "high life."

"I know your story *The Improvisatore*," said the Duchess of Suffolk to him. "It contains the best descriptions of Italy I've ever read."

"I know your fairy-tales, *The Top and the Ball* and *The Ugly Duckling*," another lady of nobility would exclaim. "They are charming, sweet, delightful."

"Yes, and the story of the tin soldier and that of *Little Claus and*

Big Claus," a third society leader would add, "how fine, how touching they are. How proud you must be, Mr. Andersen, to have written such unique little tales!"

At such compliments Hans Christian Andersen smiled graciously, saying in his heart:

"Well I certainly must be a famous man to have reached this state of recognition."

Many of the guests gave him their cards with urgent requests to dine at their homes, at an hour to be appointed by himself. At length, Count Reventlow who had watched his countryman's social success with keen gratification, drew him aside to give him a bit of advice.

"You have to-night, my dear Andersen," said the diplomat, "made a

leap into 'high life,' which most people would have required years to attain. Don't be too modest now; here one must advance boldly in order to get on." Continuing in Danish, which none of those present could understand, he added, with a twinkle in his eyes, "I noticed that you received plenty of cards. To-morrow we'll look over the pile and choose the best ones. Now you've talked quite enough with that last gentleman. Over there is another whose acquaintance will be of more value to you. At his house you will find a good table; and with that, very select society. Go to him now and acquit yourself well."

"At last," the story-teller confesses, "I was so weary of moving over the polished floor, of the men-

tal exercise of clambering over different tongues, that I didn't know what I was about. The heat was so exhausting that I was obliged to break away and seek the corridor to draw breath and get a moment's rest, at least to lean up against the balustrade." The following evening Andersen attended another reception; the third night found him again invited out, the fourth likewise, and the fifth, sixth, seventh, yes, for twenty-one days uninterruptedly he accepted invitations to dinners, balls, and various social functions. Engaged for a week ahead for dinner, he even sometimes went out to breakfast. Everyone was eager to meet him, and everyone had something complimentary to say to him. Of course, Hans enjoyed him-

self, though finally, he all but collapsed from the nervous strain occasioned by that life of tense excitement and late hours.

Shortly after his arrival at London the Danish story-teller met Charles Dickens, his favorite author and the man of all the world whose friendship Hans Christian Andersen most earnestly desired to gain. This first meeting between the two celebrated writers took place at the house of Lady Blessington, also a well-known writer. Hans had just inscribed his name in a copy of *The True Story of My Life* for his hostess, when Dickens entered, "youthful and handsome, with a wise and kind expression." It was a moment of rare happiness to the Dane and he

couldn't keep back the tears that dimmed his vision. They shook hands, looked long into each other's eyes, spoke and were friends from then on.

Several weeks later on his return from Edinburgh, Hans received a letter from Charles Dickens asking him to come to Broadstairs where the author of "Oliver Twist" was living with his family. We had rather let Andersen himself speak of the visit:

"Dickens occupied a whole house to himself; it was narrow and confined, but neat and comfortable. He and his wife received me in a very kind manner. It was so pleasant within that a long time passed before I perceived what a beautiful view we had from the

dining-room where we sat. The windows faced the channel; the open sea rolled its waves beneath them. While we were dining, the tide ebbed. The fall of the water was very rapid; the great sands where the bodies of so many shipwrecked sailors repose rose up mightily. The lantern in the lighthouse was lighted.

"During dinner an Italian organ-grinder happened to come and play outside on the lawn. Dickens spoke in Italian to the man, whose face became radiant at hearing his mother tongue. After dinner the children were brought in. 'We have plenty of them,' said my host. There were no less than five, the sixth being away from home. All the children kissed me, and the youngest kissed

his hand and then threw me a kiss.

"We parted late in the evening, and Dickens promised that he would write to me in Denmark. But we were to meet again before my departure, for Dickens surprised me by coming to Ramsgate the following morning, and was on the quay when I boarded my boat.

"'I wished to bid you farewell once more,' said he and accompanied me on board, remaining by me until the bell sounded for the start. We shook hands, he looked with his earnest eyes into mine, and when the ship began to move away, he placed himself at the very edge of the pier, looking so sturdy, so youthful, so handsome, and waved his hat. Dickens was the last person to give me a friend's farewell

from the dear coast of old England."

In the next ten years, Dickens and Andersen exchanged many letters which served to strengthen the bond of friendship between them. At the end of the decade, the English author persuaded his foreign colleague to cross the channel again, this time to spend many days in his company at Gadshill. That this latter visit was one of the brightest, happiest of his whole career, is evident from the following letter:

"Dear Best of Friends:

"At last I can write, and the delay has been long enough—too long! But every day, almost every hour you have been in my thoughts. You and your home have become a part of my soul's life, and how could it be otherwise? For years

I loved and honoured you through your writings, but now I know you yourself. None of your other friends could be more attached to you than I am. The visit to England, the stay at your house, is a bright spot in my life; therefore did I stay so long and find it so hard to say farewell. Certainly, when we drove together from Gadshill to Maidstone I was so disconsolate it was next to impossible for me to talk; I was almost ready to cry. I cannot express myself unless I write in Danish, or I would say how happy I was with you—how thankful I am. I saw every minute that you were my friend, and that you were glad to have me with you. You may believe that I value what that signifies. Your wife, too, wel-

comed me, a stranger, so cordially. I can see that it could not have been so pleasant for your whole family to have about them for weeks one who, like myself, spoke English so poorly, one who might be thought to have fallen down from the sky. Yet how little I was allowed to feel this. Give my thanks to all.

"Baby said to me the first day I came, 'I will put you out of the window,' but afterwards he said that he would 'put me in of the window' and I count his last words as those of the whole family.

"In the early morning, I am writing this letter. It is just as if I myself were carrying it to you. I stand in your room at Gadshill; see as I did the day I came, the green

fields that stretch out to Rochester; I smell the apple-like fragrance of the wild rose hedges out in the fields where the children played cricket. How much will happen before I again see it in reality, if indeed I ever do. But whatever time may disclose, my heart will ever faithfully and gratefully thank you, my great-hearted friend.

Faithfully yours,

Hans Christian Andersen."

But there is more to tell of our hero's first stay in great Britain, though we need not follow him around all the corners he turned. He saw "high life," the splendours of great wealth in London, it is true, but he saw also the grim, sickening sight of poverty. He could never forget the pinched, pale faces of beg-

gars he had met in the streets, men and women carrying upon their breast a pasteboard sign that read, "I am starving! Mercy." He remembered for years a woman in rags in whose arms lay a sick child, and who as he passed her, pointed to a sign of paper pinned to her waist that stated, "I have not eaten these two days." Whenever he could, he gave alms to these miserable outcasts.

One Baron Hambro, of whom Andersen had seen a good deal while in London, and greatly liked, induced the story-teller to accompany him to Edinburgh, in one of whose suburbs his son was spending the summer.

"My son has repeatedly urged me in letters to urge you to pay him a

visit," the old Baron had said. "As he writes, you certainly have many friends among the Scots, who will be very glad to shake your hand. Besides the country of Burns and Walter Scott is well worth seeing for its own sake."

At the country-house of young Baron Hambro, at Stirling, Hans was received like a member of the family. He immediately grew fond of the lively, lovable children in the home, took part in their play and did his best to make his English intelligible to them. Though used to hotels, though a born traveller, he had begun to long for the comforts, the peace of home life, and here was a beautiful home where he felt as much at ease, as happy, as in that of his paternal friend, Chancellor

Collin, at Copenhagen. The Hambros were devout Christians. Every evening they gathered with their servants to observe an ancient, religious custom. Hymns were sung, a prayer was said, and then the head of the house would read a chapter from the Bible. This act of worship made a good and beautiful impression upon the guest.

Accompanied by excellent guides, Hans Christian Andersen omitted seeing no interesting landmark in and about Edinburgh. Though almost painfully in need of bodily rest, foot-sore, weary-limbed, he pluckily followed his chaperones from place to place, uncomplaining. In London, incredible as it would seem, he had found a spare moment to write the fairy-tale entitled *The*

Happy Family, the only fairy-tale he ever composed on English soil, but in the chief Scottish city, he hadn't even time to think of story-writing.

I step aside once more to let my world-famous fellow-countryman relate a little incident:

"A large company of us visited George Heriot's Hospital—a grand building like a palace, whose founder, the goldsmith, we all know from Walter Scott's novel, "The Fortunes of Nigel." The visitor must bring a written permit and write his name in the register at the entrance. After we had all done this, I noticed that the old porter gazed steadily for several moments at one of the names, and thereupon turned to the elder

Baron Hambro, who had a good jovial face and silvery hair, and proceeded to show him every courtesy on the journey through the building.

"'Begging your pardon, sir, but are you not the Danish poet?' the old porter at length inquired. 'I have always fancied him as having a gentle face and venerable hair like yours.'

"'No,' the Baron replied, and, pointing to me, 'over there is the poet.'

"'So young!' exclaimed the old man, 'I have read him, as have the boys too! It is remarkable to see him such a young man, for they are always so old, or else dead, when we hear of them.'

"I heard of this and went over

to the porter and pressed his hand. He and the boys (the little inmates of the institution) knew *The Ugly Duckling* and *The Red Shoes* very well.

"It surprised and affected me to be known here, to feel that I had friends among these poor children and those having charge of them. I was obliged to step aside to hide my tears. God knows the thoughts of my heart."

Hans had been a week at "Mount Trinity," the country home of Baron Hambro, when he expressed a desire to explore some parts of the Highlands. As it happened, his host had planned, just about this time, to take his family to a certain seaside resort on the western coast of Scotland.

"So why not accompany us as far as you can on the journey," he proposed to Andersen. "We all wish to have you with us, as our guest, as long as circumstances will allow. At any rate, we need not part before we reach Dumbarton."

The story-teller gladly and gratefully accepted this further act of hospitality on the part of Baron Hambro, and soon the family—children and all—were sailing across the Frith of Forth to the little town of Kirkcaldy. On the boat, a modern minstrel in kilts sang old ballads to the music of his violin, which, however (Hans informs us), was sadly out of tune.

In the various villages where the travellers passed a night, Andersen heard many anecdotes of Mary

Stuart, Darnley, and the exploits of the old Scotsmen, warriors to the core. There was something romantic and homelike about the very country, which recalled Denmark. Even the speech of the natives had a familiar ring; words like *bairn*, *kirk*, *ken*, being very like their Danish equivalents: *barn*, *kirke*, *kjende*, meaning respectively, child, church, and to know.

Far up among the mountains, lakes and heaths of Northern Scotland, Hans was to have another experience in proof of his popularity. A boat conveying a large company of travellers had just landed at a little place on Loch Lomond, in the midst of the scenery of "Rob Roy." Among the passengers was a young lady, who, the moment she caught

sight of the Danish author, looked, almost stared, at him. A minute later her escort came up to explain that the young lady thought she had recognized Andersen from a portrait in her possession.

"And now she sends me to ascertain if she was right or mistaken, and in the latter case, to apologize. The question is, are you, sir, the Danish poet, Hans Christian Andersen?"

"Hans Christian Andersen certainly is my name," the story-teller replied.

At this, the young lady who had stood a few yards away, ran up, introduced herself, and began forthwith to express, naturally and confidentially, her happiness at seeing the author whose books she prized so highly. They chatted together

for some time, the young lady doing most of the talking, for as yet Andersen's knowledge of English was anything but perfect. Soon the girl's family joined her, were introduced and tried at once to persuade the Danish traveller to accompany them to their home and be their guest indefinitely. But of course Hans couldn't leave his friends the Hambros, who, by the way, were extremely pleased to notice the respect that was shown the story-teller. Before the young lady and Andersen took leave of each other, he asked her to give him one of the numerous mountain flowers she had plucked on Rob Roy's Rock, and she selected for him the most beautiful one of them all. This he pinned to his coat

and when it withered, he carefully put it away among his dearest keepsakes.

In Andersen's own account of his rambles through the Highlands we find the following paragraph:

"I must mention an incident in itself quite insignificant, but to me a new gleam of that fortunate star which shines for me in little things as well as great. During my last visit to Naples I had bought a plain walking-stick made of palm, which I took along to England and Scotland. While I was driving with the Hambros over the heath between Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond, one of the boys took it to play with, and when we came within sight of the latter lake, he lifted it up into the air, exclaiming! 'Palm,

do you see the highest Scotch mountain? Palm, do you see, yonder, the wide sea?' and so forth. The steamboat arrived sooner than we had expected, and we were obliged to leave the inn where we had stopped for refreshments, in scrambling haste. No sooner had the boat left the landing than I missed my cane. However, meeting a fellow-countryman I knew, who was to return by the next boat, I asked him to take possession of the cane and bring it to Denmark. The next morning I stood upon the platform of the Edinburgh railway station, ready to start for London. A few minutes before the hour of the departure of my train, the express from the North rolled in. The conductor alighted,

came up to me, whom he seemed to know, and handed me my cane, while he smilingly said; 'It has travelled very well alone.' A little tag was attached to it, with the inscription: THE DANISH POET, HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN. The cane had made a complicated journey and passed through many hands. First it had crossed Loch Lomond, then taken an omnibus ride, after that another sail, and last a trip by rail, and thanks only to its little tag reached me safely, just as the signal sounded for my departure from Edinburgh. I am still under an obligation to tell the adventures of the cane; I wish that sometime I might do it as well as it made its journey alone."

The first little book our story-

teller wrote on his return to Denmark, a volume of wonder-tales entitled *A Christmas Greeting to my English Friends*, he dedicated to Charles Dickens. It contained seven stories among which were *Good for Nothing*, *Grief of Heart*, *Under the Willow Tree*, and *It is Very True*. The book was published a month before the holidays, and entered many a home in Great Britain before Christmas Eve. Acknowledging the gift, Charles Dickens wrote to his Danish friend and admirer:

"A thousand thanks, my dear Andersen, for your kind and very valuable recollection of me in your Christmas book. I am very fond of it, and feel deeply honored by it; I cannot tell you how much I value

such a token of acknowledgment from a man with the genius of which you are possessed.

"Your book made my Christmas hearth very happy. We are all enchanted by it. . . . A few days ago, I was at Edinburgh, where I saw some of your friends, who talked much about you. Come again to England soon! But whatever you do, do not stop writing, because we cannot bear to lose a single one of your thoughts. They are too true, too simply beautiful to be kept safe only in your own head. . . .

"My wife tells me I must give you her kind greeting. Her sister tells me the same. The same say all my children. And as we all have the same sentiments, I beg you to receive the summary in an affection-

ate greeting from your sincere and admiring friend,

Charles Dickens.

To Hans Christian Andersen.

VI

The Friend of Monarchs

VI

The Friend of Monarchs

LESS than a generation has flown since Hans Christian Andersen quitted this life. It is therefore not surprising to find among the living more than a few men and women of the very many who had the privilege of hearing the story-teller himself read his delightful fairy-tales. You may be familiar with the names of some of those who, forty years ago, gathered around him to listen to *The Ugly Duckling*, *The Red Slippers*, and other wonder-stories, for the list includes such royal personages as Queen Alexandra of England, the Dowager Empress of Russia, King

Oscar of Sweden, Frederick VIII of Denmark, and King George of Greece.

Of the four Danish monarchs our author lived to see and know, Christian VIII, who reigned from 1839 to 1848, was surely his favorite. Between this ruler and his subject, a most cordial relation existed. The monarch took pride in the glorious way in which Hans was representing his country abroad. He understood that whenever a German, a Frenchman, Briton, or American, took up a copy of one of the writer's books, the reader would naturally remember Andersen's nationality, and perhaps feel tempted to exclaim:

"Well, Denmark must be a great country to have produced so fine a story-teller, a genius, as Hans Chris-

tian Andersen," or words to that effect. Besides, the King admired the writings of his subject for their own sake, and had the highest regard for the character of the man whose rise in the world was as extraordinary as it was merited. About a month before the author's departure for England—in fact, on his forty-second birthday—His Majesty wrote in an album that Hans had received from the Princess of Prussia, this sentence:

"To have obtained an honorable place by means of well applied talent is better than favor and gift;—let these lines recall to you your affectionate

Christian Rex."

There were a number of Memorial Days in his life which the story-

teller invariably strove to observe in fitting fashion. One of these (perhaps the most significant) was September the sixth, the date of his first arrival at Copenhagen. He never allowed an anniversary of that unforgettable event to pass by uncelebrated. Thus, in 1844, a quarter of a century having elapsed since he left the post chaise at the city's gate with his little bundle of wearing apparel, what good fortune could he have welcomed more heartily than that of receiving an invitation from the King and Queen to celebrate the memorable day with them?

While seated at the royal dinner-table on the afternoon of September the sixth, he all but broke down with emotion. As upon many

a previous occasion, his thoughts sped back to childhood's places, to Odense and his poor parents, to his wretched home, to hours when a piece of stale bread would have been delicious food. And now, he was the honored guest of Christian VIII, ruler of all the Danes! How like a fairy-tale it seemed!

The King congratulated him, pressed his hand and wished him happiness! Queen Caroline Amalie did the same. And when the cloth was removed, the monarch drew Hans aside and asked him to speak of his childhood and youth. Hans recited the story of some of his early struggles, which interested the monarch deeply.

"But now," he said, in the course of their talk, "you are out of the

woods? You have a fair yearly income, I trust?"

Andersen named the sum he earned by his literary labors, and the small annuity he received from the Government.

"That doesn't amount to much," the King remarked.

"But I don't require very much, Your Majesty," the story-teller modestly responded. However, Christian VIII went on to question his subject further on the state of his circumstances and his plans for the future, and finally said:

"If I can, in any way whatever, be of service to you, then come to me."

Later in the evening, His Majesty returned to the matter of the author's practical affairs, and a

gentleman who stood within hearing reproached Andersen for not having seized the opportunity to have his annuity increased.

"The King," he declared, "put the very words upon your tongue."

"But I could not, I would not have done it," Hans Christian Andersen informs us. "'If the King,' I said, 'found that I required something more, he would give it to me of his own will.'

"And I was not mistaken. In the following year, Christian VIII increased my annuity, so that with this money and what my writings bring me, I am able to live decently and free from care. My King did this for me out of the pure good will of his own heart."

On several evenings Hans read a

number of his fairy-tales to the royal couple. *The Nightingale* and *The Swineherd* seemed to please the King the most,—so much so, that His Majesty wanted to hear them two or three times.

At his parting audience with the Queen, he received from her a very valuable ring as a remembrance of his most delightful stay at Föhr, the little island in the North Sea, where the King and Queen were then summering.

Little more than three years afterwards, the story-teller stood before the Royal Palace at Copenhagen, in the snow, looking anxiously up at the windows of the King's bedchamber. Christian VIII was dying! At a quarter past ten in the evening of January 20th, 1848, he passed

away. Andersen went home and wept bitterly and tenderly for the friend he loved unspeakably, whose hand he was never to clasp again. On seeing the remains of the monarch lying in state, he became so painfully touched that he was taken ill and had to be carried, in a fainting condition, into one of the adjoining rooms.

Frederick VII succeeded his father, Christian VIII. The new king was the most jovial, good natured ruler that ever occupied a Danish throne. He never considered it beneath his dignity to enter a humble farmhouse and sit at the very modest board of some peasant. He moved about among his subjects like an ordinary citizen, freely, without swagger or the air of authority.

Soon, therefore, he grew dear to the hearts of the people, and the time came when he almost replaced his father in Andersen's affections.

Hans spent many an evening in the King's company, sat at his table, sailed the waters about the castle, in the royal craft, and was always treated with great kindness. Frederick VII liked those fairy-tales the best which were least sad and most crowded with incident. He preferred a smile to a tear, a hearty laugh to a sorrowful sigh. His favorites were such stories as *The Wind Tells the Story of Waldemar Daae and His Daughters*, *Holger the Dane*, and *The Ice Maiden*. In the latter little tale he was especially interested because, as a Prince, he had passed a good deal of time in Switz-

erland. A few days after having Hans read *The Ice Maiden* to him, the King sent his subject a beautiful gold casket, with His Majesty's name engraved upon it. This letter accompanied it.

"My good Andersen:—It is a pleasure to me to send you my thanks for the happiness you gave me by reading your delightful stories the other evening, and I can but say, that I congratulate my country and its King upon possessing a poet such as you.

Your well wishing

Frederick Rex."

In 1851 Hans Christian Andersen made the acquaintance of King Maximilian of Bavaria. This monarch had long admired the writings of the Danish author, and on the

latter's arrival at Munich, immediately invited him to dinner at his hunting-seat, Stärnberg, where His Majesty was sojourning. A leaf from the story-teller's autobiography describing this visit may be inserted here.

"At the table, the King honored me by drinking a toast to my muse, and rising from table he invited me on a sailing-trip. The weather was dull but the clouds were scattering. A large, covered boat lay on the lake, neatly dressed rowers appeared with their oars, and soon we were gliding smoothly over the water. Aboard the boat, I read aloud the story of *The Ugly Duckling*, and amid lively talk about poetry and nature, we reached an island where the King was having a

beautiful villa built for himself. Near by, a big hill was dug into. They thought it a barrow, like those we have in the North. Here they had found human bones and flint knives. The King's escort kept themselves at a distance. Maximilian invited me to seat myself beside him on a bench near the lake. He spoke of my writings and all the gifts God had endowed me with, spoke of the lot of man in the world and of that strength we have when we put our faith in the Lord. Close to our place stood a large blooming elder-tree, which gave me occasion to mention the Danish Dryad as that spirit is shown in my story *The Elder-Mother*. Passing by the tree I asked his permission to pluck one of its flowers

as a memento of these moments. The King himself broke off one and gave it to me. That flower I still treasure, among pleasant souvenirs, and it tells me of the day I passed at Stärnberg.

"'If only the sun would shine,' said the King, 'you would see how beautiful our mountains would look.'

"'I always have good luck!' I exclaimed. 'I hope it will shine!' and the very moment I uttered the words, the sun really came out, and the Alps shone in grand roseate effulgence. On our way home across the lake, I read *The Story of A Mother*, *The Flax*, and *The Darning-Needle*. It was a charming evening. The surface of the water was quite calm, the moun-

tains took on a deep blue, their snowy summits gleaming, and the whole was like a fairy-tale."

There was something so child-like, so candid and withal so lovable in the story-teller's personality that the hearts of all good, wise men went out to him unreservedly. "That man has an adorable face," said Carl Bloch, one of the greatest of Danish artists, referring to Hans Christian Andersen, and he thus voiced the opinion of every one of those Kings and Queens and members of royalty in whose luxuriant drawing-rooms the cobbler's son was ever a welcome guest.

Unalterably dear to him was an evening he spent at Dresden, at the court of the King of Saxony. Here too, he read wonder-stories, not

only to grown-ups, but to a little group of delighted princes and princesses, who treated him like a fond uncle. The littlest of the princesses, who knew that Hans was the author of *The Fir-Tree* at once took a liking to the foreigner.

"Last Christmas," she confided to him, "we, too, had a fir-tree, and it stood right here in this room. Next Christmas, we shall have another."

When bed-time came, and the little child was led away with the others, she turned on the threshold, nodding in a friendly and familiar manner, and exclaimed:

"You, Mr. Andersen—you are my Fairy-tale Prince!"

To Sweden belongs the distinction of being the first nation to

honor Hans Christian Andersen publicly. As far back as 1839, when our author was only thirty-four, the students of the University town of Lund serenaded him, held a banquet and a parade in his honor, and praised him in speeches galore. In the course of his address, one of the writer's admirers said:

"When your native land and the nations of Europe offer you their homage, may you never forget that the first public honors were conferred upon you by the students of Lund."

Two Swedish kings in succession, Oscar I, and Charles XV, opened their palaces to him and otherwise showed him every kindness. There were tears in the eyes of the former monarch and his queen, when Hans

read *The Story of a Mother* to them.

"How amiable they both were, how simple and generous," Andersen writes. "On my retiring, the Queen held out her hand to me. I pressed it to my lips. She, as well as the King, honored me with a renewed invitation to come and read to them.

"At my next visit to the palace, I was summoned to the Queen's apartment, for an hour before dinner. The Princess Eugenie, the Crown Prince, and the Princes Gustavus and Augustus were there, and soon the King joined us.

"'Poetry calls me from business,' he said.

"I read *The Fir-Tree*, *The Darning Needle*, *The Little Girl with the Matches*, and by special request, *The*

Flax. The King followed me with great attention; he said that he had read the stories on his recent journey to Norway. Each of the three Princes pressed my hand, and the King invited me to come again on his birthday, the fourth of July."

In 1846, King Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia, the first monarch to decorate the story-teller, conferred upon him the *Order of the Red Eagle.* A short time after this, Hans Christian Andersen became a *Knight of the Dannebrog*, thanks to the appreciation of Christian VIII, and soon afterward King Oscar I of Sweden sent him the emblem of the *Order of the Red Star.* From Emperor Maximilian of Mexico, he received, in 1866, *The Order of Notre Dame de Guadeloupe.*

It occasionally happened that some royal admirer, deeply impressed by the sentiment of Andersen's finest wonder-stories, would exclaim:

"But where—where in the world do you get all those beautiful thoughts, my dear Mr. Andersen? Whence do they come to you, and how?"

It is natural to surmise that Hans Christian Andersen would answer such questions in the words of his reply to a young girl who, two years before his death, put a like query to him.

"Ah, my dear young lady," he had said to her, "if you should go out some beautiful day and seat yourself beneath a blooming hawthorn, the very same thoughts

would visit you. The only difference is, you keep your thoughts to yourself, I jot mine down on paper."

VII

The Greatest Event in His Life

VII

The Greatest Event in His Life

ON the evening of November 24th, 1867, Hans Christian Andersen received a communication preparing him for what was to be the greatest festival of his life. It was from the Common Council of Odense, and ran:

"We herewith have the honor to announce to Your Excellency that we have elected you an honorary citizen of your native town. Permit us to invite you to meet with us here on Friday, December 6th, as upon that day we desire to deliver to you your certificate of citizenship."

The next morning Andersen wrote the following reply:

"Last evening I received the communication of the honorable Common Council and hasten to convey my deep-felt thanks. My birthplace is granting me through you, gentlemen, a recognition, an honor, greater than any of which I had ever dared to dream.

"Forty-eight years have passed since I, a poor boy, departed from my native town. Now, rich in happy memories, I am received like a fond child in its parental home. You will understand my feelings. It is not vanity that uplifts my heart, but thankfulness to God for those heavy hours of trial and those days of blessed joy that were mine. Accept the gratitude of my whole heart.

"I look forward with pleasure to the appointed day, December 6th, to join, God granting me health, my noble friends in my beloved native town.

Gratefully and respectfully yours,

H. C. Andersen."

To the Common Council of Odense.

For five or six days preceding the celebration, there was much ado in Hans' birthplace. Old women stopped each other in the street to discuss the wonderfulness of it all. Hans, the son of Marie Andersen, who took in washing and whom they could easily remember—Hans, the one-time pupil of a school for poor people's children—was about to become an honorary citizen of Odense, a distinction rarely con-

ferred upon any one. The only honorary citizen they had ever heard of before was the royal prince living in the old castle near the railway station, and now a poor shoemaker's son was to take rank with him!

The arrangements for the celebration were quite elaborate, and the work of the various committees appointed by Mayor Mourier went on with admirable precision. All Odense was determined to make this the event of a lifetime—an event of historical importance. If Hans had hitherto failed to understand that Odense was both proud and grateful to him as the most illustrious of her sons, he would understand it now.

At noon on December 4th, the

train conveying Hans Christian Andersen from Copenhagen rolled in. Bishop Engelstoft, who was to be host, stood on the platform to greet him. Slowly, and wearily, as it seemed, the famous story-teller climbed out of the coupé. He looked anything but happy; and though his face lighted up at the sight of his friend, it soon clouded again. Thinking he was merely out-of-sorts, the bishop tried to cheer him by speaking of the sumptuous public display he was about to behold. He talked about the enthusiasm of the hundreds of children who were to sing and dance after the great banquet on Friday, at the Court House Hall; explained how the mechanics of the town had planned to give one of the greatest

torch-light processions that had ever been seen in Odense.

"Everybody is talking of you," Bishop Engelstoft pursued, on the journey to his episcopal mansion. "Every available flag will be unfurled in honor of you, day after tomorrow. According to the old custom, the streets will be strewn with green, bands will play, the populace will shout, 'Three cheers for Andersen, our native poet!' I could not tell you how many poems, how many musical compositions have been written for the occasion, or how many speeches have been prepared. The schools will all be closed, in order to give the children a perfect holiday, and business will be practically at a standstill. But you seem depressed. Come now, my dear

Andersen, what is it that troubles—"

Hans was struggling between smiles and tears. He put his hand to his cheek.

"It's a toothache, a terrible, infamous toothache. It started last night, just as I was packing my luggage. I haven't slept a wink. It almost drives me mad; and besides, my dear bishop, the thought of all this honor simply overwhelms me. Of course I am appreciative, but, believe me, I feel so unworthy, so undeserving of it all, that I have hardly the courage to face it."

At the episcopal mansion everything was in readiness for the arrival of its distinguished guest. There, he was no stranger but an ever welcome, intimate friend of the household. Two prettily furnished

rooms had been set aside for his use, and the moment he entered the ancient, ivy-hung building he could but feel a sense of security and peace. The whole house seemed flooded with the light of kindness. Every object he touched or looked at seemed to say, "Welcome!" Gentle hands surrounded him with every comfort, which loving words made doubly sweet. It was December and winter winds were blowing outside, but within the walls of Bishop Engelstoft's home, Spring held full sway.

The unforgettable day dawned. Hans rose early, opened his window and glanced up and down the street. Flags and bunting, decorating the houses, swung daintily before a soft breeze. It was as quiet as upon a Sunday morning.

All night he had been unable to sleep for the torture of toothache and nervous excitement. The color had fled from his face, and courage from his heart. Only with dismay could he now look forward to the celebration. Again and again, he summoned his strength and bravely strove to keep "a stiff upper lip." Yet, as he remarked to Bishop Engelstoft's youngest daughter, he felt like a man about to meet his doom.

"Now I can understand," he said, "the state of mind of a man about to be beheaded, feeling the way I do — I, for whom people are doing only what is good."

At eleven o'clock came the carriage containing the committee appointed to escort Hans Christian

Andersen to the Court House. As in a dream the story-teller entered the vehicle, which immediately drove off. Hans leaned back in his seat, in a half-dazed condition. But suddenly he awoke with a start. Hundreds of little children were following his carriage, shouting hurrah! and waving flags. He looked ahead; the big square in front of the Court House was crowded with people! And how handsomely the buildings all around were decorated! Now he realized that the grandest day of his life had begun. He grew somewhat calmer and more self-reliant, varied emotions playing in his heart. Over there, to the right of him, in the little lot by the Church of St. Canute, lay the grave of his father,

and a stone's-throw away was the old home of his childhood.

The carriage drew up in front of the Court House entrance.

"Hurrah for Hans Christian Andersen!" cried the people, pressing closer and closer to the vehicle.

The band struck up one of his own songs, "In Denmark I am born, there is my home." Profoundly moved, but now completely master of the situation, the "honorary citizen" allowed himself to be escorted up the stairs and into the hall where Mayor Mourier stood ready to open the official exercises and present to Andersen his certificate of honorary citizenship. This was a very attractive-looking document bound in red velvet and richly decorated with ornamental designs in

gold. At the end of his presentation speech, Mayor Mourier called upon the audience (the large hall was filled with prominent men and their families) to give three cheers for Hans Christian Andersen. Needless to say, that was done with a will. Thereupon the story-teller took possession of the diploma. He turned, facing the crowd, and tears came into his eyes as he said:

"The great honor which my birthplace is conferring upon me, overwhelms and uplifts me. I can but think of Aladdin, who, when he had erected his magnificent castle through the power of his wonderful lamp, stepped to the window and said: 'Down there I walked when a poor boy.' It has pleased God to grant me an intellectual lamp—the

literary gift—and when it shone out afar, and when people in foreign lands took delight in it, and when they said, 'It shone from Denmark,' ah, then my heart beat joyously. I knew that at home I had sympathizing friends, and most certainly in that town where my cradle had stood. And this city gives me to-day such glorious evidence of its sympathy, confers upon me an honor so overwhelmingly great, that, deeply moved, I am only able to convey to it my heart-felt gratitude."

This little speech was greeted with hearty cheers, and then everyone hurried forward to clasp his hand. Hans tried his best to look happy and to express, in word and gesture, the deep appreciation of his heart, but all the time he was

suffering great pain from that miserable tooth!

Returning to the episcopal mansion, he hastened to join young Miss Engelstoft in the sitting-room, intending to give her an account of the triumphant event. Of a sudden, as he was crossing the floor, a shrill cry escaped his lips, he brought his hands to his temples, reeled and all but fell. In an unmindful moment, omitting to consider his great length of body, he had collided with the chandelier! Instantly, he experienced an utter change of mood. He saw an ill omen in the accident, and, terrified, began to bewail his misfortune. However, bathing his forehead, and comforting him, Miss Engelstoft soon managed to revive his spirits.

There were speeches and songs galore at the banquet in the evening. Representatives of all classes had gathered to pay him homage —clergymen, merchants, doctors, lawyers, professors, even peasants. Splendidly decorated, brilliant with light, the big Court House hall presented a most imposing scene. From his place at the head of the table, Hans could see a magnificent portrait of himself mounted on a pedestal, on the frame of which were three medallions bearing these inscriptions: April 2nd, 1805 (his birthday), September 4th, 1819 (the day he left Odense for Copenhagen), and December 6th, 1867 (the day upon which he was made honorary citizen of his native town).

Responding to the toast of a Mr.

Petersen, a prominent merchant, who briefly but eloquently told the story of the author's wonderful career, Andersen remarked that this was his third visit to the Court House hall. The first time there, he saw an exhibition of wax-works; the second, a kind old musician had taken him along to watch a celebration in honor of the King's birthday; the third was the present occasion. He said that it seemed like a fairy-tale to him, too good, almost, to be true.

"But life itself," he concluded, "is, after all, the most beautiful fairy-tale."

While the banquet was in progress, letters and telegrams of congratulation kept pouring in. One despatch came from the King

and Queen themselves, one from the students of the University of Copenhagen, one from the story-teller's old schoolmaster of Slagelse, and so on. As they were read by the toast-master, the assemblage cheered again and again.

At length, after Hans had made a third speech, in which he mentioned his gratitude to Chancellor Collin, perhaps his greatest benefactor, the guests arose, the cloth was removed and the hall cleared for the appearance of a band of children who were to bring their greeting in songs and dances to their favorite writer. An old-fashioned, plush-covered armchair was brought out; Hans sat down in it, but at this moment, his tooth (which for several hours had remained fairly

quiet) began to ache atrociously.

In swarmed the children—in red and white. They sang with sweet, clear voices; they danced with dainty, graceful motions. And their faces expressed that innocent confidence, that guileless charm which has never had a better interpreter than Hans Christian Andersen.

The author was deeply affected by the spectacle; he ignored his tooth, and throwing formality to the winds, took one of the children on his knee and began to tell fairy-tales after his old inimitable manner, to the unbounded gratification of all the little ones.

Meanwhile the torch-light procession had been organized, and, headed by a band of many pieces, was marching up toward the Court

House Square. It was now quite late, but all Odense was on its feet. The main thoroughfare, through which the parade moved, was literally packed with people, who pushed onward like a slow surging stream, under the red glare of the torches, of which there were several hundred.

There was one old widow in the multitude who, on seeing this manifestation, burst into tears. She had known Hans' parents, and it seemed sad that they should be denied the satisfaction of beholding this evidence of their only child's incomparable success.

The paraders drew up in front of the Court House, and Hans Christian Andersen stepped over to an open window and looked down at the throng. This was the sign for

the thousands to burst into song, and the band to play with greater enthusiasm than ever. The light of the torches seemed to rise higher and higher against the black December sky; the vast chorus of voices seemed to grow and grow in volume. Emotion utterly overwhelmed the story-teller. A vivid memory flashed into his mind; the memory of an occasion, forty-eight years ago, on which his mother had taken him to an old clairvoyant, whose prophetic words had come true:

"He will be a famous man, and one day Odense will be illuminated in honor of him."

Andersen stayed in Odense until the eleventh of December. He visited the home of his childhood, and lingered in the garden where,

as a little boy, he had dreamed so much, so deep, beside the lone gooseberry bush, and under the canopy of one of his mother's aprons. He stood again at the brink of the Odense *Aa* and saw the very rocks upon which his mother had stepped when rinsing her linen in the flowing stream. The ancient mill-wheel was whipping up foam as of yore; the bridge that led to the moor was in its old place.

Though the formal festivities were ended, the hospitable citizens of Odense showed no desire to ring down the curtain on the celebration. During the remainder of his stay, Andersen must have attended at least ten different social functions, the largest of which took place on Sunday, at the episcopal mansion,

at which one hundred and thirty guests were present. It is not too much to say that a thousand persons called on the story-teller at Bishop Engelstoft's home, in the course of the seven days he resided there. Toothache or no toothache, he greeted them all with unvarying pleasure and kindness. Among the callers one morning was a poor fisherman, Gotfred Schenck, a schoolmate of Andersen.

"Well, Gotfred," said Hans, extending his hand, "you've whipped me many a time, but it's kind of you to come and see me."

And he slipped a gold coin into the fisherman's callous palm.

Of course, the station platform was crowded with people at the hour of Andersen's departure for

home on December the eleventh, and, of course, there was more hurrahing, more shouts of "Long live our poet!" Admiring friends had fairly filled his coupè with fragrant flowers.

"Come again soon," the people cried at the top of their voices, "we can't see too much of you! Remember Odense is your home town! Three cheers for Hans Christian Andersen!"

"Thank you! Thank you, one and all!" Hans kept saying, waving his hand and nodding to the right and left.

At length, the conductor blew his whistle, the train began to move, Hans leaned far out of the coupè window to bid a last farewell, and say a last "Thank you," to

the cheering crowd, and thus the extraordinary holidays were brought to a close.

But the memory of them lingered undiminished in his heart forever.

VIII

The Story-teller as He Was

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UP to the fifty-third year of his age, Hans Christian Andersen never tried to obtain decent apartments at Copenhagen. In 1858, however, he took possession of fairly spacious and comfortable quarters in a house facing the King's New Square and directly opposite to the institution he loved—the Royal Theatre.

The author frequently received letters from American admirers urging him to visit this country, which, they promised, would give him a reception unparalleled in all his career. He never came, be-

cause he was afraid to cross the rough Atlantic.

"There is that endless ocean between us," he once wrote to a friend in the United States, "that fortnight (it took the fastest steamships of those days two weeks to make the voyage from England to New York) of raging sea; and I am quite sure that for very many days of that fortnight I should get nothing but seasickness for my money. The great ocean is a terror to me, —and yet I love it so much, when I am safe on dry land."

To be frank, it was not so much the fear of seasickness that kept him from starting the journey that would have been the most magnificent excursion of his life—as the greater fear of shipwreck or other

form of disaster. He could never forget the awful fate of Henriette Wulff, a very dear friend of his and who, in 1858, lost her life on the *Austria*, a transatlantic liner which had burned at sea. The constant thinking of that sad event so affected him that one day, walking in the street, the houses suddenly appeared to him like so many monstrous waves dashing against one another and threatening to make him their victim. The terrifying hallucination did not pass by until Andersen had summoned all the force of his will to shatter it.

In the face of imaginary personal danger, Hans was anything but brave. He had the presentiment, for instance, that if an epidemic were raging within one hundred

miles of his whereabouts, it would not fail to overtake him, no matter how fast he might hurry from its path. We are told that if a cat had scratched him or a dog snapped at him at close range, he would go about for days expecting an attack of blood-poisoning or hydrophobia to come on. If, as it sometimes happened, he scraped his knee upon some sharp surface, he would be sure the injury, however slight, would result in dropsy; and if he discovered a pimple over his eye, he gloomily took it for granted that it would grow and grow and never cease until it had made him utterly, stark blind. More than once, when troubled with a headache, he ran off to some kind friend to tell him that he knew his days were now

numbered. Merely stubbing his toe could inspire the horror that nothing short of an amputation would save his life. Almost to the last, he was obsessed by the dread of premature burial.

Fortunately, Hans was able to laugh as well as weep over those little foibles, even if he could not get rid of them. Nor did he try to conceal them from the world. He kept his life open to all—without a secret. For it was ever his wish that his fellows should know him in the light of his faults no less than in that of his virtues. As we have seen, anybody—of whatever rank in society—could have his confidence in the early years of his life, and in this respect he never changed. He judged men mildly, and he prayed fervently

that they in turn might so judge him.

To the last, Andersen cherished an unfailing, enthusiastic love for the theatre as a place of amusement and instruction. It was his club, his second home, and he felt bound to it by almost human ties. During the next to the last winter he saw, 1873-74, when too ill to be able to leave his room for weeks at a time, he missed no pleasure so much as that of going to the playhouse. There was scarcely a scene in any of the best Danish dramas (or those of other countries, for that matter) with which he was not thoroughly familiar. The walls of his apartment were fairly littered with playbills which the old story-teller delighted in studying with the same rapture as he had felt while pouring

over the placards given to him by Mr. Junker, the Odense bill-poster, sixty years before.

We are informed that, at the period just mentioned and on such evenings as he was forced to spend at home, he would seat himself, promptly at seven o'clock, in his cosiest chair, and imagine himself a spectator at the Royal Theatre. In fancy he would hear the overture, see the audience pouring in, see the lights go out and the curtain glide up, and lo! the performance began! To-night, as Hans knows, they are playing *Hamlet*. The invalid is holding the programme in his hand; he knows the tragedy so well, has seen it so often, that he can follow in imagination the actors' every movement with

perfect ease. The minutes pass, the stay-at-home sits there before his fire, motionless yet excited. At this instant, he finds by consulting his watch, the ghost of Hamlet's murdered father appears telling the son the terrible secret of his death . . . Now the *Prince of Denmark* addresses *Ophelia* with mocking words . . . Now the *Players* hold the stage . . . Now (the tragedy is fast coming to a close) the *Queen* swallows the poisoned drink, and thirty seconds afterward *Hamlet* avenges the murder of his father by stabbing the wretched king *Claudius* to death. Another moment and the melancholy Dane is no more. He falls at the feet of his loyal friend *Horatio*. They are carrying away his lifeless body to

sounds of funeral music . . . The curtain slowly drops . . . The lights are turned on . . . The audience rise. Hans, too, gets up, folding his programme. Now he may go to bed, gratified, for he has been to the play!

Andersen's relation to his God is a beautiful story in itself. His belief in the efficacy of prayer was implicit. To him, God did not dwell only in realms beyond the rim of vision; to him, God was no mere mysterious far-off Spirit who revealed Himself to mortal man only on rare, rare occasions; but a near Presence, a Being to commune with every day, every hour. He was beside, rather than above and beyond you. You reached out your hand and you felt Him take it to guide you. You spoke and

in your heart you heard His voice answering. If you were discouraged and lonely, if the world looked dark and cold, the smile of God—yours for the faintest sign—brought sunshine and warmth and comfort. "Oh, if I could, I would clasp God to my bosom, I love Him so!" Hans used to exclaim.

With the fervor of a little child, he said his prayers every night. He was infinitely grateful to his God, by whose grace he had compassed such great ends. When he looked back across the ways of his life, how could he but recognize the guidance, the support of a loving Providence? It was this feeling that often made him say and write, "I am the child of Fortune," and "How beautiful is

the world! How good are human beings! That it is a pleasure to live constantly becomes clearer to me."

The note of his wonderful success, of his world-wide fame, never tainted his heart with arrogance. In hours when the praises and rewards of men raised him to the glory of a king, in hours of triumph, his inmost thoughts were with his Creator, his divine Protector. "If I have wrought good, God's alone be the glory, and may I never write down a single word that I shall not be able to account for, to him."

Much—too much—has been written, especially in Denmark, on the subject of Andersen's vanity. Even to-day many of the more or less malicious anecdotes invented at various periods during Andersen's

lifetime, go the rounds and provoke laughter. They deal with his sensitiveness, his fastidiousness in the matter of dress, his craving for praise, his pride, etc.; in short they aim to make him a very ridiculous figure, a figure bearing but little, if any, resemblance to the man as we have learned to know him.

Hans Christian Andersen had vanity, of course, and perhaps he lacked to a perceptible degree the quality of manliness. There was nothing heroic, nothing awe-inspiring, nothing formidable about him. No forbidding frown played across his face, no stalwart air lent firmness to his carriage of body. Being in his company did not move you to exclaim, "What a dignified, what an imposing man!"

But if his vanity be considered his greatest fault, how little and how harmless a thing it is beside his simplicity, his confidence in his fellowmen, his love of Truth, of Beauty, of Nature. He doted on elegance of attire; he coveted and encouraged admiration, was susceptible to flattery; he permitted himself to voice his own opinion of his writings. There you have his four chief weaknesses, which were unpardonable sins in the eyes of the people who had no patience for him, who never understood him and who, we may conjecture, could no more enjoy his fairy-tales than they could fathom the secret of his phenomenal fame. I could mention some names and facts, but this is hardly the place to speak at length on this matter.

The war between Germany and Denmark in 1864, put the author in an awkward position. Naturally, he wanted to see his country win, but on the other hand, he had always had a deep affection for Germany, where his books were read by thousands, and among whose people were many of his dearest friends, in whose homes he had enjoyed lavish hospitality. So, while his fellow-poets were writing war-songs, inspiring the nation to take up the sword and fight to the death against the powerful enemy, Andersen, anxious, distressed, grieved, was mute. He could not write; he had no heart for work. At times, a sudden desire to enlist in the army and go to the front would arise within him. But he could never yield to

it, not only because he was now well advanced in years, but he abhorred the spectacle of war. It seemed to him brutal, inhuman, unchristian.

For taking this view of the question at this particular time, Andersen had to suffer a great deal of abuse.

"You are no patriot," people said to him. "You are a man without a country. Instead of shedding tears and bemoaning the crisis that is upon us, you should be up and doing. Why don't you go out, shoulder a gun, and do battle against our foe. Don't you see that the life of our land is threatened? Or why don't you say words that will bring new courage and hope to the hearts of our brave sons? Fairy-tales, for children, is that all you

can write? We need men now, men of action, fighting men, patriots, but you, you are like an old woman!"

Hans bore such reproaches with becoming good nature. He readily forgave those who criticized, rebuked, or even plainly wronged him—indeed a kindlier spirit could hardly be imagined. We recall that a few years after leaving Meisling's School he met the bilious head-master one day in Copenhagen.

"Hello, Andersen," cried that old tyrant, extending his hand. "I see you're getting on well, and I wish to congratulate you. I treated you unfairly in the old days. Suppose we make up?"

"I'm quite ready to do that,"

Hans responded, to the man whose last words to his pupil were curses, who, in taking leave of him at the Latin school, had shouted that Hans' books would grow mouldy on the bookseller's shelves, and that the author would end his days in a madhouse. "I'm quite ready to do that. By-gones are by-gones, and I gladly overlook them. I have no ill feeling toward you, Mr. Meisling."

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that Hans Christian Andersen was incapable of feeling the passions of anger and resentment. His blood *could* boil and his eyes *could* flash. A story is told of a dispute the author engaged in one morning with a chambermaid. Andersen on returning to his room

at a certain hotel, after breakfast, found the servant there tidying the place. Hans didn't like the shiftless, shabby manner in which she did her work. A "confirmed" bachelor, he knew more than a little about domestic duties, having often for instance made his own bed, and put his apartment in order. So he ventured to criticize the maid's deficiencies. This she vigorously resented, declaring that she knew her duties to perfection, and that no guest was at liberty to interfere with her discharge of them. If Hans had any complaint to make, why didn't he take it to the hotel manager, she wanted to know.

Her tone of address, we can well fancy, must have been anything but

courteous, and naturally the story-teller took exception to it. And now began a battle of words. Faster and faster, did the servant's tongue wag. Louder and louder, too, did the storm of talk roar.

It soon grew evident to the guest that his opponent was rapidly gaining ground in the quarrel, and crowding him to the wall. She could pour out a gush of words that literally took away his breath. He was outclassed; he realized that it was utterly beyond his powers to silence this strong-mouthed adversary. But how to end the fight and retire honorably?

Suddenly, he rushed over to the bed and seized two pillows. Taking aim, he hurled these in rapid succession at the irate menial, who

was quick to strike back at him. They fought at "close quarters," pummelling each other unmercifully, until every curl on the author's head was no curl at all.

"Will you surrender? Will you surrender?" cried Hans, delivering well directed blows.

At length, quite fagged out, flushed and perspiring from the excitement of the fray, the combatants agreed on hoisting the white flag of truce. But shake hands with him the servant would not, before Andersen had given her a good-sized tip. Then peaceful relations were established between them.

That Andersen was a man of sentiment goes without saying. He could never bear to destroy any-

thing that had the appeal of a keepsake. He hoarded up all sorts of trifles, sea shells, toys, charms, scraps of paper with a favorite child's writing upon it. And the letters he kept—they would fill a small warehouse.

He has himself told us of a little experience of pure sentimental interest, and yet which gives us another key to the inner chambers of the story-teller's heart.

One evening a few hours before his departure from Maxen, a beautiful country-place near Dresden, Germany, Hans found a little larch—so small that he could have stowed it away in his pocket. It had been thrown away by the roadside. He stopped and picked it up, only to discover that it had been broken.

"Poor tree," the author said to his hostess, who accompanied him, "it must not die."

Thereupon he began to look about the stony ground for a fissure containing a little earth in which to plant the tree.

"They say I have a lucky hand," the author went on, "and perhaps the tree will grow."

At the very edge of a rock he found a crevice containing enough soil to permit of his planting the larch there. This done he went away, and for a long time thought no more of it.

"Your tree at Maxen is growing admirably," said a friend to him, two or three years later at Copenhagen. The next time Andersen came to Maxen he heard it men-

tioned as "The Danish Poet's Tree."

"The tree took root," Hans informs us, "shot out its branches, and grew tall, because it had been cared for by my friend and hostess, Mrs. von Serre, who had caused earth to be laid about it; after which she had had a piece of the rock blown away and the hole filled in with rich soil. Lately, a path had been laid out close by, and in front of the tree stood a sign bearing the inscription: 'The Danish Poet's Tree.' It had not been molested during the war with Germany, 'But now,' said the people, 'it is going to die.' A mighty birch was growing alongside, its large branches spreading over the larch tree, robbing the smaller tree of sunshine and air, and checking its growth.

But one day, there was a violent thunder storm. The lightning split the birch, uprooting it bodily, and 'The Danish Poet's Tree' stood free and untouched. I came to Maxen and saw my young tree, and nearby, the stump of the birch. A new plate bore the inscription."

Not until two or three years before he died, did the famous man begin to entertain the thought of building a house for himself. The burden of old age was then upon him and he suffered more or less from a complication of diseases. He didn't like the Danish winters any more; they made him feel restless and homesick.

While confined to his rooms, he sketched out all the plans for that villa of his (in his head of course).

The house was to have a big room with a glass roof, a sort of studio, which was to contain busts of all the leading Danish authors arranged in a circle, in the center of which, Hans was to have his writing-table. Fine oriental rugs should add further adornment to the chamber. He made the boast to his friends that his new home would be totally different from all others.

With pride and gratification he would count the money he had in the bank, finding that he possessed ample funds to build a splendid villa. But the villa never became a reality. It was one of the last things Andersen spoke about.

As soon as the report of Andersen's illness reached this country, a rumor spread to the effect that

the favorite author was in reduced circumstances, in need of comfort and human care, indeed, even in want. The sadness of such news touched thousands of responsive hearts. A committee was quickly appointed to determine upon a course of action. They agreed to collect a sum of money by popular subscription, to give to Andersen on his seventieth birthday. Meanwhile, however, a letter of inquiry had reached the old story-teller. To this he replied that he enjoyed all the good things that mortal man could ask.

"My sympathetic friends must not think," he wrote to the American committee, "that I am a poor, neglected, old author, anxious about his daily bread and

unable to take care of his sick body. God has been very good to me, and loving friends surround me—and I cannot accept any gift from individuals."

Hans Christian Andersen lived and died unmarried. This fact covers a secret concerning which the author was generally and consistently reticent. In his Autobiography he makes but the merest allusion to it. Let us hear the sad little love-story—the only love-story of his life!

In August, 1830, or when he was twenty-five, we find Hans visiting at the house of his friend and classmate at college, Christian Voigt, whose parents, wealthy and prominent, lived in Faaborg which is not so very far from the town of Odense.

The moment he entered that house, a pair of brown eyes met his, a woman's white hand reached out to him, and—he fell in love with his friend's sister, with Riborg Voigt. It was love at first sight, as we may say, but, on his part at least, it was pure and enduring. Did the young lady respond to his affection, did she return his love? In a way, yes—to a certain extent. But (and there was an insurmountable *but*) she had recently become affianced to another! So great, so overwhelming was Andersen's feeling for her, that he expressed his willingness to make any sacrifice. He would give up authorship with its uncertain results. He would learn a trade, or study for the ministry. He would do anything in order to

secure a steady income—if—if she would but marry him. For three days—for three days only, he remained at Mr. Voigt's home. Then, seeing the hopelessness of his case, he hurried away heart-broken, utterly miserable.

Some months later they met and saw a good deal of each other for a space of three weeks, at Copenhagen. What did they say to each other? How did they finally part? We do not know. Only of this are we aware. Riborg Voigt did not break her engagement for Andersen's sake, but married her fiancé and lived happily with him. But Hans remained true to his first love forever, and his finest poems were addressed to her. When he was dead, August fourth, 1875, those

who unclothed his body found a little pouch upon his breast, over his heart. In it was a letter from Riborg Voigt, which the author had worn for forty-five years without ever mentioning the matter, not even to his dearest friends. With the letter was the command that her words to him, her last, no doubt, be burned unread. This was immediately done.

He looked peaceful and happy in death, the gentle old story-teller. Even after the spirit had departed, it was as if his voice kept murmuring, as it had done up to almost the very last second of breath:

"How happy I am; how beautiful the world is. Life is so beautiful. It is just as if I were sailing into a land far, far off, where there is no pain, no sorrow."

Fra de Voksnes Eventyr
by Dr. phil. Jens Kruse
"Bien" Maj 2
Kruse taler om Eventyrdigtere
fanarmenale Verdensbekönn
"Kun i smaa Kredse og
sont af Voksne udviklet Kar
skabet til hans Geni:
I Danmark, (som i Udlandet
större de Voksnes Kærlighed til
ne dejlige Digte bliver, jo m
de undrende aabne Skönh
Visdommen og Skönheden
i hans Eventyr . . . .
Det "höjtbevarende" i H.C.A.
mange Börn -- . En 7-aars
"Der er alt for meget med grim
og oh! det er saa dejligt.
H.C.As. egne Ord: "Naar jeg tæn
mig mine Eventyr fortalt for
tænker jeg mig tilbage, at Fade
Moder stod hos!"
Börn maa faa et Eventyr
Andersens rige Geni! Det
den Ebne at føle den hemm
fedsfyldte Risten gennem
Nerver, Varmen, Styrken,
det man som Voksen
lever i H. C. Andersens
skabe er for den Voksne